

Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Issue

THE
Commonweal

RELIGION
and
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

**I—The Christian in
a Secularized Culture**

**III—Challenge of
the Specific**

**II—Nature of the
Catholic Response**

**IV—Religion and
Esthetic Values**

On all Women's and Children's Apparel



...SYMBOL
OF DECENCY,
FAIR LABOR
STANDARDS AND
THE AMERICAN
WAY OF LIFE



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THE COMMONWEAL
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THE Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The Commonweal Approach: An Editorial

WITH THIS ISSUE The Commonweal completes thirty-five years of publication. When the magazine was started, in November of 1924, the editors wrote: "The difference between The Commonweal and other weekly literary reviews designed for general circulation is that The Commonweal will be definitely Christian in its presentation of orthodox religious principles and their application to the subjects that fall within their purview. . . . But it will be in no sense—nor could it possibly assert itself to be—an authoritative or authorized mouthpiece of the Catholic Church. It will be the independent, personal product of its editors and contributors, who, for the most part, will be laymen. . . ."

Ever since the first declaration of purpose, the editors have regularly restated the theory behind The Commonweal, with varying degrees of success. This special thirty-fifth anniversary number represents an attempt to demonstrate rather than explain that theory.

Everything in this issue was published in The Commonweal some time during the last ten years. The items selected were not chosen with the idea that they necessarily represent "the best" from The Commonweal during the period—although they would clearly be included in such a category. Nor can it be said that these selections add up to a "typical issue," if only because so much had to be left out. But we do think the total result gives a good picture in miniature of The Commonweal approach and of some of the magazine's central concerns over the years.

Of all the efforts that have been made to summarize this magazine's point of view, perhaps the thumbnail description that comes closest to the truth remains the statement that The Commonweal represents "not a movement but an attitude."

That attitude is a Catholic attitude, and The Commonweal is generally referred to as a Catholic publication, although it is not, to use the term people apply to diocesan papers and magazines published by religious communities, an "official" Catholic publication. Rather, The Commonweal is, quite simply, a magazine published by men who are themselves Catholic and who endeavor to express a point of view on temporal matters in conformity with their religious principles. Thirty-five years ago the editors promised that the new publication would be "the independent, personal product of its editors and contributors." This is exactly what The Commonweal is, neither more nor less.

Since the editors of this magazine are laymen, its primary concern is with the temporal order, which is the specific province of the layman. In the light of their religious beliefs, the editors see the temporal order as being directly related to the spiritual, and their day-to-day judgments reflect this conviction. Add to this the further fact that contributors to The Commonweal include many of the world's ablest Catholic writers, and it is not hard to see what distinguishes this magazine from comparable "secular" journals and why the magazine is generally thought of as Catholic. But there is nothing more "officially" Catholic about The Commonweal than this, and the editors have always gone to some lengths to make this fact quite clear. Nonetheless, misunderstanding on the point persists, and this fact itself says something significant about Catholicism in America.

There is no secret about the fact that The Commonweal frequently represents a minority point of view—or at least a point of view quite different from that found in many diocesan papers and Catholic magazines. For example, the editors were—and are—unable to share the enthusiasm of

most American Catholic publications for Generalissimo Franco. In Father Coughlin's era *The Commonweal* saw his *Social Justice* as intolerant and totalitarian in spirit, and said so. More recently, while some "official" Catholic publications heaped praise on Senator McCarthy and scorn upon his critics, the editors of this magazine viewed his "crusade" in a context of national fear and self-doubt and felt it had little to do with any rational means of dealing with the Communist threat.

That our opinions on such public questions drew criticism and disagreement from other Catholics did not surprise us. As we have said often before, the editors of a journal of opinion expect other people to have opinions of their own. But what always surprises us is the nature and temper of some of the attacks made upon us. Many of them do more than pass beyond the decent limits of controversy; they also tend to distort the image of the Church in the public mind by blurring the distinction between prudential judgments on temporal issues and Catholic dogma. It is this confusion, we think, rather than differences on any particular subject, which really is at the bottom of our major disagreements with many of our Catholic contemporaries.

There is nothing extraordinary about the fact that Catholics frequently disagree on specific questions of the day. Indeed, the only extraordinary thing would be if this were not the case. But what is disturbing is the way some Catholics try to elevate personal judgments on passing events or political figures into dogmas of orthodoxy which all must hold if they are not to be labeled "pseudo" or "so-called" Catholics.

When those outside the Church worry about a "Catholic party line," it is this attitude on current affairs they have in mind, not immutable and unchangeable Catholic dogma on such matters as the Trinity or the Real Presence. As *The Commonweal* completes its thirty-fifth year of publication, its editors have come no closer to explaining just why some Catholics persist in supplying enemies of the Church with ready-made arguments to "prove" that there is in fact a "Catholic party line" on issues like Franco, Father Coughlin or Senator McCarthy. For our part, we rejoice that diversity of opinion on matters which are not essentials of faith is a fact in American Catholicism, and our pages will continue to reflect this diversity.

As Catholics, the editors of *The Commonweal* do not accept the philosophical principles of that continental "Liberalism" which was condemned by the Church, but the magazine's approach to day-to-day issues is normally described as "liberal." The term itself, of course, is ambiguous and

clouded with historical uncertainty, meaning one thing to one man and something quite different to another, and normally we hesitate to use it ourselves. We do, however, understand why people refer to us this way and we accept the designation—although our "liberal" views on many questions strike us as more truly conservative than those advanced by most of the right-wing Catholic publications. And, if only to indicate how unsatisfactory most labels of this sort are, it is worth noting here that many of our contributors, including several in this issue, would certainly describe themselves as conservatives rather than liberals.

Be this as it may, the editors of this magazine clearly tend to be "liberal," not in the nineteenth-century European sense but in the modern American sense of the word. We are deeply committed to the idea of political democracy, and we have little patience with Catholic writers who discuss political questions as if nothing had happened between the French Revolution and the present. We value the American Constitution and oppose any interference with due process of law. We cherish our own civil liberties, and we defend those of others. We abhor anti-Semitism or racial discrimination in any form. We are deeply concerned with genuine measures to fight Communism—moral, economic, military and psychological—and completely uninterested in "anti-Communist crusades" that make bold headlines but signify nothing. We support domestic measures we think will help in achieving that social justice described in the papal encyclicals, and we favor efforts to promote international social justice by aiding the underdeveloped nations. We think Catholics have not given enough thought to what it means to live in a pluralistic society and we consider it imperative that they repair this omission. These are some of the things we stand for, under whatever label they can be found. If doing so makes us liberal, we are liberal; these are good causes, no matter what name is put to them, and we will continue to support them in the years ahead.

There remains, then, only to express our deep appreciation—to our loyal subscribers, to former editors, to our talented and valued contributors, to our many friends among the clergy, bishops, priests and religious, to those friends of the magazine whose financial aid has meant so much recently, particularly the members of the *Commonweal* Associates. To all we are deeply grateful, for without them the magazine could not continue. And as we start our thirty-sixth year of publication, we are more convinced than ever of the value of what people have over the years come to call *The Commonweal* approach.

I—The Christian in a Secularized Culture

Reality of the Cross

by VICTOR WHITE

GEORGE Bernard Shaw was only one of the many honest men who have been indignant at what he called "Crosstianity." He wrote of how the crucifixion of Jesus Christ "became to the Churches what the Chamber of Horrors is to a waxwork show; the irresistible attraction for children and for the crudest adult worshippers," and he said "Christ's clean water of life is befouled by the dirtiest of dirty water from the idolatries of his savage forefathers."

That standpoint is understandable and deserves respect. Shaw showed more understanding of what Good Friday is all about than do those of us who unreflectingly take it as a comfortable matter of course. For one asks of worship and religion that they shall uplift us; that they shall appeal to what is finest and noblest in life, not to what is at best most commonplace, at worst most base. And can it be denied that the story of the Crucifixion may appeal to the most sentimental and maudlin in us, the most primitive and uncivilized, perhaps the most sadistic? Or that its attraction is not wholly unlike that which leads people to wallow in sensationalism, to gloat over other criminal executions? And it *is* true that this sort of attraction goes back to our savage forefathers; to the age-old, worldwide, cruel and hideous rites of the human sacrifice of dying gods and murdered kings. Shaw understated rather than exaggerated the horror of it: for the Christian message is not content to befoul clear waters: it urges a positive blood-bath. It bids us—paradoxically enough—to wash ourselves white in the Blood.

This is *the* paradox, *the* scandal, of the Cross. This is what Paul knew must be to the Jews a stumbling-block and sheer madness to the Gentiles. But a Christian rejoices in what Shaw, and many another sensitive and sensible man, deplores. It is not that he denies that the Divine speaks to what is most refined and

cultured in man, and speaks in figures more noble than those in the chamber of horrors: in a fugue of Bach, in a landscape of nature or of Cézanne, in the cosmic dance of Shiva, the tranquil contemplation of a Buddha, or the high speculations of a Plotinus or a Spinoza. But he believes that the God in Christ speaks to the lowest as well as to the highest in man: to the most commonplace and ignoble in us as well as to our more unearthly, high-minded ideals and aspirations.

Jesus Himself, "signifying by what death He should die," foretold the magnetism of His crucifixion, when He said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto Me." And He understood the true character of that magnetism when He said "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." What is lifted up, as the symbol and vehicle of our healing, is not spiritual uplift, nor what is already most unearthly and lofty, but contrariwise the serpent—all that is most earth-bound, slimy, revolting, primitive, poisonous, cunning—the snake-likeness in us all which, according to the old story, had been the very origin of our undoing. It is precisely to all *that* in us that the Crucifixion boldly appeals in defiance of our would-be spirituality and idealism; and it is precisely in the willing acceptance of all this earthly and deadly baseness that Christian faith tells us is to be found the Divine—healing, salvation, grace and peace.

This is the logical outcome of Christian belief that God becomes man. Divinity comes right into our human situation: God accepts the human lot of us all: our helplessness before the inexorable fate of death: the victimization of the innocent by injustice and superior power. He enters even into our experience of the death of our ideals and values, of our highest God—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Christ bids us to take up our cross daily and follow Him. But that is because first of all He has taken up our cross and followed us; taken the human way of the cross which is the way for us all.

So it is not *only* what is most infantile and crude in us that responds to the Crucifix. The very crudity of the emaciated, bleeding figure on Calvary, suspended between earth and sky, forsaken of God and man, mirrors the "existential anxiety" which is endemic to the human situation. . . .

We can be insensible to the appeal of the Crucified, only if we are insensible to the realities of our own existence. For on the cross, we ourselves are portrayed, and only if we have dulled awareness of our own predicament can we fail to see our own reflection there. . . . In one way or another, crucifixion is the destiny of us all.

For a Christian, Good Friday is an annual reminder—as the Crucifix and the Mass are daily reminders—of that matter of plain fact, which we are so eager to forget. But all this is a matter of fact only; not yet a matter of faith. Christian faith proclaims that this human fact is also divine. Other images than that of crucifixion may be more uplifting and more edifying. But, if they convey some different message, then, though they may elevate and cleanse man's perceptions,

they will not heal and deliver him through and through, from the highest in him to the basest. For the Cross proclaims that man can transcend his situation only through wholly accepting it—drinking to the dregs the bitter-sweet cup of human life and death. Only in being human—consciously and unflinchingly—can man become divine; as only through becoming human and tasting human life and death could God become humanly accessible.

So there is wisdom in the folly that makes the Christian's Rite of Spring the commemoration of a bloody, sordid execution. . . . And in our day, the threat of tyranny, and of the extinction, not only of our mortal selves but of our culture and our race, make our own reflection in the figure of the Crucified all the more poignant and unmistakable. For now, as our Master foretold, we see . . . "men's hearts failing them for fear for those things which are coming on the earth." But this, just this, is the cruel time which the Christian has been taught to recognize as spring. For his Master bids him: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, you see and know that summer is at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass . . . see and know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

April 1, 1955

The Secularization of Culture

by THOMAS F. O'DEA

IN THE development of Western civilization, three major processes stand out: the spread of Christianity, the rise of modern science, and, closely related to both, the secularization of culture. The last, indeed, is one of the fundamental characteristics of our present world.

Secularization has progressed over several centuries and is characterized by a remarkable shift in the center of gravity of thought and values. The belief—one might almost say the spontaneous recognition—that man and his world are derived from and dependent upon a Power which transcends the appearances of things, that man owes reverence to and obtains strength from that Power, has been dissipated and lost among strategically important strata within Western society. In its place has come a practical—or at best a poetic—terrestrialism, characterized sometimes by a resigned acceptance of a truncated spirituality, sometimes by a simple agnostic matter-of-factness, unconcerned with that of which it is largely unaware, and sometimes marked by a heroic search for significance in the "absurdity" of it all. Since Western culture

developed from Christian roots, this process of secularization has taken the concrete form of a de-Christianization.

To examine this secularization, two conceptions seem necessary, one derived from the nature of man, the second from man's nature and from Christian doctrine. The first may be stated succinctly in Martin Buber's terms: man may relate himself to his situation—to things, fellow men, and the mystery of being—in one of two ways. He may make a "technical relation," that is, he may manipulate things by external control, or he may make an "essential relation" to them, responding interiorly to them as subjects.

Man may, in short, respond to the other in all realms either as to a "thou" or to an "it." Obviously he must do both if he is to survive—and remain human—but one mode will be dominant. Unless manipulation, the "technical relation," is subordinated to the "essential relation," knowledge and art are reduced to technique, fellowship to impersonal instrumentalism, and religion to unbelief. The first balance required by a truly human life is the subordination of manipulation

to the dominance of essential relationships in man's converse with the world.

The second conception required to analyze the secularization of culture refers to the Christian tension between the Kingdom of God and the "world." Here, too, the hierarchical equilibrium is the key to solution: the world is, for the Christian, subordinate to the Kingdom of God. Closely related to this tension is another, rooted in the very nature of man—the tension between the spirit and the flesh; this also admits only of a hierarchical solution, and thus plays a contributing role in upsetting the Christian solution of the Kingdom-world problem. . . .

In the world in which we live, the terrestrianness of the here-below limits the horizon of large numbers, while many have lost the ability to make any genuinely essential relation to reality. Even fellow men become more exclusively the objects of instrumental treatment. Exploitation there has always been; inability to conceive of relationships other than technical is a mark of the latter days. Secularization of culture, while making the world all, simultaneously reduces it to an "it." It makes man either manipulator or soulless object.

The Catholic cannot but experience a deep his-

torical anguish in the face of such developments. He is moved to say with Pascal, "When I see the blindness and the wretchedness of man, when I regard the whole silent universe, and man without light, left to himself, and, as it were, lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who has put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him at death, and incapable of all knowledge, I become terrified. . . ."

As intellectual and scientist, the Catholic encounters this secularized world daily in a thousand guises. Should he be a layman he is the more exposed, unprotected by the relative insulation of clerical dress and unreinforced by clerical solidarity. He cannot find even the irrational relief which some of his brethren may occasionally enjoy in blindly attacking these trends and all their consequences. He must be a friend of everything in nature and culture that can lead man once again to a sense of the Transcendent. He must cherish everything in man and in art that can help secularized man to find the possibility of essential relationships within the depths of his own psyche, and he must follow his calling and love his neighbor amid the disarray.

April 20, 1956

Role of the Layman

by BEDE GRIFFITHS

IT IS almost a century since Monsignor Talbot wrote to Cardinal Manning: "What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all. . . ." It would be unfair to suggest that these words, which caused so much distress to Cardinal Newman, were representative of Catholic opinion even a hundred years ago. But there was certainly a strong tendency to minimize the function of the layman in the Church and to view the Church as a hierarchical structure of which the layman was a kind of appendage.

Nowadays all that has changed. The importance which is now attached to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, the concept of Catholic Action, the Liturgical Movement, have all helped to reinstate the laity in its proper position as a definite "order" within the Church with its own specific function. As Pope Pius XII has declared, "the faithful, and more especially the laity, are in the front line of the life of the Church; by them the Church is the vital principle of human society."

These words of Pope Pius indicate the specific function of the laity. The Church has its hierarchical

structure, consisting of the clergy and the bishops under the supreme authority of the Pope, whose function it is to teach, to rule and to administer the Sacraments by which the life of Christ is communicated to mankind. But the means by which this life is able to penetrate into the world, to become the leaven of human society, to reconstruct the world according to the principles of the Gospel, is the laity. . . .

It is the laity which forms the bridge between the Church and the world. The layman belongs integrally and vitally to the Church, but he also belongs to the world. Today we realize, perhaps more than ever in the past, the immense need there is to redeem the world—not merely to redeem people from the world, but to redeem the world itself, to enter into its economic and social and political life and strive to bring the principles of the Gospel to bear on it; to enter into its intellectual life and try to make the influence of a Christian philosophy felt in the universities and in the arts and in the whole pattern of its culture. We live in a world which has become progressively alienated from Christianity and which requires to be redeemed on almost every level of existence. This must be above all the work of the laity and it is for

this reason that the lay apostolate has become a matter of such urgency and importance.

This is not to suggest that the work of the laity is, as it were, outside the Church, or that it has no specific function within the Church in direct association with the hierarchy. On the contrary, the very meaning of Catholic Action is that the laity is actively associated with the hierarchy in the apostolate of the Church. The present age has seen a renewed interest not only in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ but also in the concept of the priesthood of the laity. Every Christian is incorporated by his Baptism into the Mystical Body of Christ and made an active member of that Body with his own specific function. In this connection the importance of Confirmation has also received a new emphasis, as it is precisely the Sacrament by which the powers conferred at Baptism become mature and fit the Christian to fulfill his function as an active member of the Church.

In Baptism a Christian is given a participation in the very life of Christ, and specifically in His three-fold power as Prophet, Priest and King. The words of the Apocalypse of St. John apply to all Christians: "He has proved His love for us by washing us clean from our sins in His own blood and made us a royal race of priests to serve God His Father." It is the 'people of God' as a whole, the *laos* from which the laity takes its name, which has been made into a 'kingdom of priests.' Among this people there are, of course, certain individuals set apart, like Aaron and his brethren in the Old Testament, to perform specific priestly functions, but the whole people shares in its own degree in the priesthood of Christ and is associated with the hierarchy in the work of Christ.

This same realization of the role of the laity can be seen in the Liturgical Movement, which has for its governing principle the fact that the layman is not merely present at Mass as a spectator, but has the right and the duty to share in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. The priest says at the Offertory: *Orate, fratres, ut meum et vestrum sacrificium . . .*; it is the sacrifice of the whole Mystical Body of Christ which is being offered and the people offer it with the priest as members of the one Body, although the function of the priest within the Body remains unique and distinct. . . .

If Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist all receive an added significance for the layman when he understands his proper place in the Body of Christ, the Sacrament of Matrimony receives perhaps still more significance. In the past, marriage has not always been allowed its proper place in the life of the Church. There was a strong tendency in the early Church to exalt virginity to such an extent that marriage was correspondingly depreciated. . . . It is only in recent years that the idea of marriage as a voca-

tion to sanctity has come to be widely recognized. In the early centuries Christian perfection was nearly always seen in terms of flight from the world; for us it is seen more and more as a demand to enter into the world, to face the challenge of the world and to redeem it.

This realization has led to the recognition that there is a need, for the layman, of a new concept of sanctity, a sanctity which is deeply and fully engaged with the world and for which the Sacrament of Matrimony has a unique importance. This is not to say that the ideal of the religious life has lost any of its value, but it has to be seen in the wider perspective of the Christian life as a whole. The problem for many Christians today is how to be radically detached from the world and dedicated completely to Christ, and yet at the same time to be engaged with the world, implicated in its essential problems and working for its redemption. It is upon the layman that the primary responsibility falls for bringing the Gospel directly into the heart of the world and forming a Christian society there.

But this is no easy task. The world makes its own very exacting demands, which cannot be evaded. It is not as though there were any ready-made Christian solution to the world's economic and social problems. The Gospel is a leaven; it inculcates a spirit; it provides certain guiding principles. But the application of these principles to life is something which requires extraordinary insight and a close acquaintance with practical problems.

In other words, what is demanded of the layman is not only a knowledge and zeal for the principles of the Gospel, but also a very close and exact study of the facts of any situation, economic, social or political, in which he is involved, and of the feelings of the people affected by it. This means that he may have to work with people whose ideology is very different from his own and cooperate in movements which may have no specifically Christian character and yet need to be injected with the spirit of the Gospel. . . .

This penetration into the world demands intelligence on the part of the laity; it requires people to think for themselves and to be prepared to act independently, while still keeping to the guidance of the Church in general principles. Thus the great need is for the intellectual formation of the laity, and it is here that the immensity of the task which is set the laity in modern times becomes apparent.

During the past two or three centuries the world has made advances beyond all precedent in science, history, philosophy—indeed, in every sphere of knowledge. In almost every case these advances have been made without any reference to the Church and often in direct opposition to it. Yet all this knowledge belongs of right to the Church, because all truth, whether

human or divine, derives from Christ and can be properly understood only in relation to Him.

The Catholic intellectual, therefore, has a double task. He must first assimilate all this new knowledge; he has to master its technique and submit to the rigorous requirements of its methods. But at the same time he has to exercise a continual critique of all its principles and conclusions. He can never accept the presuppositions which underlie much of modern thought, but has to submit them to a drastic revision.

A good example of this is to be found in the Catholic attitude to the psychology of Freud. The Catholic must be prepared to learn everything that is to be learned from the psycho-analytical method of Freud and from its basic insights, and at the same time must reject entirely the materialistic basis on which Freud constructed his system. The same principle has to be applied to physics and biology, to history and philosophy. Always there has to be the readiness to learn; to accept new facts, new methods, new insights; but at the same time there must be a radical criticism of the underlying principles.

In this task the Catholic has the advantage of possessing a coherent philosophy which is capable, in

principle at least, of application to every problem. But there is a danger of this very applicability becoming a positive barrier to a real assimilation of knowledge. It is only too easy for Thomism to be regarded as a closed and completely self-sufficient system. To be able to grasp the fundamental principles of Thomism and yet to keep the mind open to every new movement is extremely difficult, but very necessary. . . .

It is this respect for truth wherever it is to be found that should be the mark of a Catholic mind. If the world is to be won for Christ, it can only be by the assimilation by the Catholic mind of every aspect of truth which the world has to offer, and this not merely in the sphere of theory and speculation but of morality and practical life. . . . For the Church can only grow by means of this continual assimilation of truth of every kind, bringing it into vital relation with its own essential truth, in which all truth is implicitly contained. Thus the bringing back of the world to Christ is but an aspect of the growth of the Church to her own maturity, the building up of the Body of Christ, and in this work the laity is, in the words of Pope Pius, "in the front-line of action."

November 9, 1956

The Laity in America

by ✕ ROBERT J. DWYER

THE INNER HISTORY of the Catholic Church in America from Archbishop Carroll's death in 1815 until the eve of the Civil War is largely concerned with the controversy called Trusteeism. This was one of the major factors in the shaping of the Church as she is today—for better and for worse. Without understanding it we cannot fully grasp why she still entertains certain stubborn fears and disquietudes in the matter of full cooperation between hierarchy and laity. . . .

Trusteeism, briefly, was an effort on the part of a small minority of American lay Catholics, aided and abetted (when not actually led) by a few discontented priests, to overthrow the authority of the bishops. It was strongly tinged by Protestantism, strongly influenced by ideas borrowed from Rousseau and the *Philosophes*. . . . It sought, first of all, to deny to the American bishops the actual ownership of Church properties, which the malcontents asserted should be vested in bodies called trustees, and in which the bishops should have only their individual voice. It went on to claim that the appointments or dismissals of parish priests should rest with the trustees, not with the bishops, and so with the foundation of parishes and

the establishment and conduct of diocesan schools and charitable institutions.

In a word, Trusteeism was an attempt to make the American Church a lay church. It would have substituted for co-operation between hierarchy and laity the complete subservience of hierarchy to laity, on the plan so commonly followed by the American Protestants in their various frames of church government.

Be it confessed, not all of Archbishop Carroll's contemporaries and successors in the American hierarchy were men of his judgment and prudence; not all shared his convictions concerning the congeniality of our democratic institutions for the growth and prosperity of the Church. . . . The result was a period verging on chaos for the American Church. For a time, in the '20s, '30s, and on into the '40s of the last century it seemed as though large segments of the Church might drift into actual schism and ultimate heresy.

The factors which prevented such a disaster were many, among which may be noted the beginning of the great Irish and German Catholic immigrations to these shores, bringing vast populations, who were not interested in this particular quarrel, the outbreak of the Know-Nothing movement, violently anti-Catholic,

which caused in reaction a closing of our own ranks in defense, and the success, after long struggles, of the majority of the bishops in disciplining the refractory priests and in asserting their authority over both the spiritualities and the temporalities of the Church. And added to these perhaps the most important factor of all, the foundation spirit of mutual understanding between hierarchy and laity which was Archbishop Carroll's enduring legacy.

Trusteeism had to be crushed, no doubt about that, for had it not been rooted out it would have warped and sprung the Catholic Church in this country. But as is the case with almost every draconian measure, the rooting out of Trusteeism meant also the damaging of the original American Catholic spirit which has been identified here with Archbishop John Carroll. Essential as was the victory for the divinely established authority of the bishops to rule their dioceses as successors of the Apostles, and not as chairmen of governing boards, it nevertheless resulted in a situation where the part of the laity in this cooperative effort which is the work of the Church was reduced almost to a minimum.

There was nothing obnoxious in the original concept of laymen's acting as trustees of the churches and institutions, so long as this meant cordial and sincere cooperation with bishops and pastors, with prompt and respectful acknowledgment of the voice of authority when it spoke out in final decision. There is much, theoretically, in favor of an ideal arrangement in which the temporalities of the Church should be confided in large measure at least to the care of the laity, leaving the clergy untrammelled for the cure of souls. But as a matter of historical record, the reaction against Trusteeism, in the form of lay interference and arrogation of authority, took the form of the practical exclusion of the laity from any discretion in the temporalities of the Church.

Another factor which gave impetus to the development of the American Church along lines of exclusive clerical control was the enormous influx of immigrants. The average Catholic newcomer, hampered by educational, linguistic, and social handicaps, had few ambitions for leadership in Church affairs. He was willing enough to leave the running of the church to his pastor, a wiser man than he, and to the bishop, of whom he stood in wordless awe. It was the business of the clergy alone, as he saw it, to manage the Church according to their greater enlightenment; it was his business to get ahead and to save his soul. Cooperation as a principle in the life of the Church never entered his head, nor was it suggested from the pulpit, save as a matter of collection. Other than that, it might as well have been a temptation of the devil.

But times change, and, saving that which is changeless in the deposit of faith and in the constitution of

God's Church, we change with them. Never even in the darkest hours of the reaction against the virus of Trusteeism was lay-cooperation in the work of the hierarchy wholly forgotten or ignored. Most American bishops and priests, however jealous of their rights and privileges, were not insensible of the vast reservoir of power in the laity. Indeed, the whole point and purpose of the mighty effort of building the Catholic school system was not merely the negative hope of preserving the Faith, but the positive determination to create an educated and responsible laity. . . .

During the past three decades, certainly, rapid progress has been made in the development of a spirit of genuine union of purpose and effort. Much has been done to overcome the old hesitations, both on the part of the clergy and the laity. Yet it is almost superfluous to remark that we have only begun to utilize this tremendous potential of cooperative zeal. We are still slowly feeling our way along. And it is precisely in this matter of the cooperation of the hierarchy and the laity that there is found the greatest weakness in the Church in America. How quick our opponents are to grasp the significance of this weakness is demonstrated by their constant efforts to create an atmosphere of distrust in this very area. Men like Paul Blanshard are anything but fools. Their persistence in trying to persuade America and American Catholics in particular that the hierarchy is a purely self-seeking body of men, who work day and night to keep the laity in abject subjection and blind ignorance, intimates the wisdom of the serpent. For they realize very clearly that up to the present moment we have not perfected the means of putting our potential of cooperation to work. They know that a distinguishing characteristic of the vast bulk of American Catholics is an enormous absence of personal responsibility for the work of the Church, and they are keenly aware that not too much is being done to remedy the situation. They have found the vacuum.

That vacuum is primarily our concern, as it is our reproach. It is our task to fill it with the Actual Grace of God's saving activity, moving men to perform their appropriate personal share in this divine work.

August 27, 1954

AUTHORS—I

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II—The Nature of the Catholic Response

Life in the Living Room

by JOHN STANLEY

IT'S a pity Graham Greene's "The Living Room" closed after such a short run in New York. There are many instructive things in it, and this is an age of not inconsiderable ignorance. . . .

The living room is a Catholic world Mr. Greene and others of us have experienced, and can show scars to prove it. The living room is the only room left in a big house; most of the other rooms have been shut and locked, one by one, when someone died there, and the world is so full of death that the family is kept moving to avoid their shades. There are so many dead: liberals and Communists and apostates and heretics and those who practice birth control (contraceptive, that is) and homosexuals and Jews and, well, all the dead. These people must be cut off from recognition as existing in the real, living world. Contact with them might cause one to become dead, too.

The living room is a world of nice people, rather gray and fruitless, but nice. Ideally they are either unmarried or clerics, and only rude intrusions from below vulgarize the situation. All are related, of the same clan. No breath of scandal ever froths the placid atmosphere, nor poverty, nor, indeed, great luxury; *virtus in medio stat*.

The living room is a world of "devotions" and touched-up photographs of Saint Therese and the diocesan weekly, full of pictures and news of anniversaries and deaths and the blessing of buildings and movie proscription lists and anti-Communist editorials. The living room is a fortress from which anathemas can be hurled and from which the enemy can be spotted from a long, long way off.

The living room is a place of stern propriety. At one end of the room is a door leading to a landing and stairwell and the world below; at the other end a door leading into the w.c. When one of the maiden

aunts, Aunt Therese—in one of the few laugh-producing bits of business in a pretty grim play—has to "attend to the needs of nature," as delicate persons have put it, she enters and passes through the living room and into the bathroom without either hearing or seeing or speaking to anyone. In a little while she emerges and again crosses the room in the same manner and goes out the other door, and then immediately re-enters. One simply does not take cognizance of such activities; they are out of time and place, a sort of demi-eternity.

The living room is a world of fear and rigidity. There is great concentration there on sin, especially the ones listed in the manuals of piety and devotion. And above all the ones against the Sixth and Ninth Commandments. Watch and ward; be prudent; be not presumptuous; do not give scandal; the Church is a private club and no one must mar its reputation. Stern measures must be taken to preserve the impeccability of the living room. (I once had a professor who saw fit to spend an entire class period of a one-semester course in Hispanic-American history to prove—with the aid of a great pile of books and considerable enthusiasm—that the Church has the right to inflict the death penalty.) Past glories and "rights" and sin, these are the great things to contemplate in the living room.

Thomas Merton has spoken about the importance of plasticity, stressing the fact that nothing should be allowed to obscure the tremendous fact of God's existence and His love for us. And that not even sin, mortal sin, should lead us to forget the ocean of love which is God. This is not to say, of course, that one should ever minimize sin's enormity, but it is to say that the proper focus of a person's spirituality should be on God, not on sin. To contemplate sin is to contemplate death and sterility; to contemplate God is to

contemplate fertility and love and the only framework in which love can become operative: liberty. But in the living room they say with a tight-lipped smile, "But we must remember always, mustn't we, the difference between liberty and license?"

Part of the duty of those who try to think a little about things and talk out about them is to keep turning the medal over and over and over. And to see the other side of the medal is to see that the inhabitants of the living room suffer bitterly from their own special maladies, even though these maladies cause suffering in others. They have their dark nights, even though Greene's Father Browne does not consider himself sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life to be undergoing the spiritual purification endured and described by Saint John of the Cross—whose poetry he reads to his sister, Therese. There is a woundedness, and a certain humility about him that cannot help but enkindle sympathy. These people should be liberated, too; they want to break through.

Recently a reviewer praised Miss Barbara Ward as one who is attempting "... to rescue Christianity from the hands of the pious." Mr. Greene is another. In a world trembling and frigid from an absence of the knowledge of God, even repelled by the notion of God—because of the caricature of Him that has been proliferated—in this world, on the street, in sight of the watchful, critical eyes of the inhabitants of the living room, he is attempting to talk about God. He is trying to talk about Him in an acceptable vocabulary and accent. A thing is known in the knower

according to the manner of the knower . . . and what Mr. Greene knows about God is built around concepts such as pity and mercy and love and infinite understanding. With Christmas fresh in mind, one asks, Is God not like this? God knows Himself as He Is and He knows the fact of the flesh and its glory and its capacity for suffering.

Due to no small extent to the mentality and actions of the inhabitants of the living room, the people on the street below see the flesh as something either for suffering and discomfort (which they try to avoid) or a means of pleasure (which they seek to exploit); they disconnect the two. In the living room the flesh is seen chiefly as an occasion for sin. They give their assent to the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Assumption, but they do not explore the implications that are the children of these dogmas.

Father Browne reads a poem written by Saint John of the Cross about the ecstasy of the Dark Night, and this poem was written at a time when the Saint was enduring sufferings of the flesh and spirit to a degree most men are not great enough to endure, and Saint John was happy. And this is to say that suffering and happiness and flesh and spirit are not arranged dichotomously but in unity. And God is united to us during this suffering-happiness. Our participation is limited for we are little children, and, as Mr. Greene has suggested earlier this year from Indochina, the Cross is so overwhelming that it is perhaps fitting that children should play and sing in the shadow of it.

December 31, 1954

A Christian Style of Life

by PHILIP SCHARPER

IT IS HAZARDOUS, of course, to speak of a Christian style of life because one is always prone to think of it as a uniform mode of action and reaction. It is necessary to remind oneself constantly that this style of life is capable of an indefinite number of different embodiments, as the rich diversity of the saints attests. But the fact that it is hard to define, like love or poetry, does not make it less real. It is what happens to a person when he tries habitually to think the Christ-like thought, speak the Christ-like word, do the Christ-like act.

The complaint voiced to me most often by my former students is that their Catholic education did not recommend such a style of life. The divinity of Christ was proven, His role as Redeemer was studied, His establishment of the Church made plain. But little attention was paid to Christ as the Model and Meaning

of life for the Christian, who if he is not, in effort at least, another Christ, is nothing. He can bring to the world nothing more important than his effort to "show forth" Christ.

This may sound naive or purely pietistic in view of the complex problems which beset the modern world. But can we not say that an element in the complexity is the fact that Christians have so often approached these problems in a manner almost indistinguishable from that of the non-Christian, that the Christian has so often adopted a non-Christian style of life?

Would we, for example, have come into the twentieth century without even an inchoate theology of work (without, indeed, even the phrase) if the Christian consciousness had kept vivid the image of Christ the worker, making useful things for His neighbors at Nazareth because He loved them? Would a theology

of work have lagged so far behind the psychology and sociology of work if Christian meditation on the new Adam of Nazareth had led to an intuition that man is a collaborator in creation, that "man the maker" is, by his work, fulfilling his nature, not living out the curse laid upon the old Adam?

Would the religio-political conflicts between American Catholics and their non-Catholic neighbors be quite so bitter and unblessed if (to look at no conscience other than our own) we Catholics did not so often approach these conflicts in a non-Christian style? I know that such issues as Christmas observance in public schools and direct Federal aid to Catholic schools are complex political and social problems. Our rights as citizens are involved, I know, but so too,

perhaps, are the Beatitudes, and Christ's injunction to walk a second mile with him who forces you to walk one, and the example set for us by Christ before Pontius Pilate.

And would we Catholics tend to betray quite as much nervousness as we do in the face of the perils which threaten us if we confronted them in more of a Christian style? Communism, nuclear war, the rising tide of nationalism in Asia and Africa—these hold the threat of cosmic evils. But if a Camus or a Pasternak, in the face of crisis and chaos, finds a radical joy in the mere fact of being human, should not the Christian be able to find a much deeper joy in the fact of being Christian?

April 3, 1959

A Catholic Columnist's Lot

by DONALD McDONALD

FOUR YEARS ago I began writing a weekly column for the *Catholic Messenger* of Davenport, Iowa. Today, the column appears in the *Catholic Messenger* and four other diocesan weeklies with a combined circulation of about 180,000. Three other editors for a time published the column and then dropped it.

Not a very great success, the column, at least by usual American standards which measure success in terms of size, power and other quantitative considerations. But then I was never under any illusion that my views and judgments would be acceptable to the majority of diocesan editors. Any columnist who criticizes the actions and ideas of Senator McCarthy, Senator Bricker and General MacArthur, who insists on reading Pope Pius XII "straight" when he comes out, for example, on behalf of the political federation of the world and the various welfare agencies of the United Nations, such a columnist finds out very quickly that the market in the Catholic press for this kind of writing is sharply limited.

I have no personal complaints because of those limitations. But I think there is room for a general complaint. A Catholic press is not healthy in which the applied teachings of the Holy Father must wage an uphill fight for admission, in which criticism of political immorality is not tolerated, and arguments against what Pius XII recently called "selfish nationalism" are never printed. It is downright sick when, in addition to these negatives, the Catholic reader is confronted by editors who actually take up the cudgels for Senator McCarthy, isolationism and, yes, even "selfish nationalism," all in the name of "official" Catholicism.

I do not, ordinarily, have an opportunity to carry on a lengthy correspondence with readers. But on one occasion I decided to test the persuasive power of unadorned truth and irrefutable evidence.

A reader in Chicago accused me of misinterpreting and misapplying Pius XII's counsel on the need for world federation. In his letter he said that the America First-ism of Clarence Manion, Father James Gillis and the *Chicago Tribune* was much closer to traditional Catholic teaching on the subject than was my own allegedly garbled analysis and application of Pius XII's thoughts.

In my reply I cited a number of unequivocal affirmations of federalism by the Holy Father and an equal number of his condemnations of the thesis that national sovereignty is an absolute and that a citizen has no obligation towards what Pius calls "the international community."

My Chicago correspondent replied that I was quoting Pius XII out of context, whereupon I mailed him half a dozen full texts of pertinent Papal addresses which had been printed in the *Catholic Messenger*. Two weeks elapsed and I received a two-page letter from my correspondent. I had indeed, he acknowledged, quoted and interpreted the Holy Father correctly, but the Holy Father, he said, is wrong; Clarence Manion, Father Gillis and the editors of the *Chicago Tribune* are right anyway.

It was a hollow victory for me. It set me pondering an imponderable: how many Catholics are there in this country who have more confidence in the irrational politics of the ultra-nationalists than they have in the political wisdom of Pius XII? Not many, perhaps, but

even one is too many. A collateral question: how many Catholic editors and Communion-breakfast orators are responsible for this misplaced confidence of the Ameri-

can Catholics? The answer to that question is more ascertainable, and more scandalous.

February 10, 1956

The "Liberal Catholic"

by WILLIAM CLANCY

THERE is a special burden, and the danger of a special presumption, in writing on the concept of a "liberal Catholic." The special burden is the deep historical antipathy which these two words have acquired toward each other, and the consequent difficulty of effecting any reconciliation between them. The danger of presumption lies in seeming to set up a kind of pseudo elite within the Church. . . .

Yet the term is widely used to describe a type of Catholic whose world-view is marked by an enthusiastic acceptance of certain ideals for which liberalism has waged its great battles—maximum human freedom under law, social progress, and democratic equality. And there can be no doubt that the Catholics so described do constitute, if not an elite, at least a definite minority within the Church. The problem then presents itself of whether or not the point of view described as "liberal Catholic" does indeed contain inherent contradictions, and whether or not the minority so described in any sense compromise their Christian vocation.

The antipathy which the Catholic and the liberal have felt for each other is real, and its causes are basic to the philosophy of each. When Pius IX solemnly condemned "Liberalism" and denied that the Church could, or should, reconcile itself with "Progress" he pronounced the Church's judgment, once and for all, on that doctrinaire rationalism, secularism, and anti-clericalism which lay at the base of liberalism's spirit in the nineteenth century. This condemnation was secretly welcomed by many Continental liberals. They heard in it the death-knell of the Catholic Church. The condemnation still stands, and the thoroughgoing liberal still reads it as the self-written epitaph of a religion which has announced its removal from the modern world.

As a result of this, the Catholic who associates himself with some of the struggles which are properly identified as "liberal," and who, consequently, gains a reputation as a *liberal* Catholic, is apt to find himself suspect among large numbers of his co-religionists. For them, the idea of a Catholic allying himself in any cause with the traditional enemies of the Church suggests a Catholic whose orthodoxy is at best doubtful, and whose loyalty is obviously weak. Certain Catholic journalists spend a lot of their time damning the

"liberals," and when they find a "liberal Catholic" they feel sure that they've found a "so-called" Catholic.

But if a "liberal Catholic" is often viewed with suspicion by some of his fellow Catholics, his lot is even less happy among the liberals. The professional liberal is, of course, glad to find an occasional ally among the orthodox, but he is also surprised—and he is skeptical. To the extent that he trusts the man's liberalism, he tends to doubt his genuine Catholicism. Or, if he is convinced of this, he begins to doubt his liberalism.

The beleaguered "liberal Catholic" thus stands between two worlds which view each other with mutual distrust, and which, according to their proper lights, exclude each other. Those whose theology he shares frequently distrust him because of his politics, and those with whom he feels at home politically may doubt him because of his theology.

The difficulty is partly a semantic one. Probably no Catholic who bears a reputation for "liberalism" welcomes the "liberal Catholic" label. The term itself is so burdened with historical and philosophical ambiguities that the kind of all-around misunderstanding described above follows almost inevitably upon its use. It defines nothing, and describes only by accident a world view far different from the vague attempts toward religious-philosophic syncretism which it is often interpreted as representing. It is essentially a Catholic affirmation of value wherever value is to be found, and an attempt to recover for the Catholic tradition elements which, through default, have been appropriated by movements hostile to the religious spirit. . . .

It is ironic that although many nineteenth-century liberals actually welcomed the Church's strictures on the modern world, the final victory has belonged to Pius after all. The very things for which he condemned "Liberalism" and "Progress" in the nineteenth century are also the things which have led to liberalism's bad name in the twentieth. Its belief in the inevitability of progress, its overly optimistic estimate of human nature and consequent denial of evil, its dogmatic rationalism—these are ideas turned bitter in the terrible fulfillment of contemporary history. . . .

It would surely have been too much to expect that Catholics would omit taking a certain public satisfaction in this. Unfortunately, that satisfaction has sometimes

been almost as indecent as it is presumptuous. All the "we've-always-told-you-so" talk about the "failure of the liberals," and the present low estate of liberalism, seems an extension of something which has been tragically wrong with so much Catholic thinking on the liberal problem during the past one hundred and fifty years. . . . Moral relativism, anti-intellectualism, Rousseauistic optimism, religious indifferentism—all these by-words of historical liberalism have helped to lead us to the precipice on which we now stand. The tragedy of modern history, then, is not the condemnation itself, but rather what so many liberals—and Catholics—have made of the condemnation.

The liberals have taken the condemnation not only as a rebuke to their philosophy itself, but as a Catholic repudiation of everything for which they have struggled. The Church thus becomes in their eyes not only the enemy of moral relativism, religious indifferentism, and dogmatic rationalism, it also becomes the enemy of political liberty, social equality, and material progress. It becomes the eternal protector of the status quo, the perpetual tender of inquisitorial fires, the vigilant enemy of the city of man. And so the fight for the goals of the city of man—for civil freedom, for social and economic equality, for a pluralistic society, assumes the guise of a struggle against the Church.

The liberals have been assisted toward this interpretation by a good many Catholics who, in their reactions against the philosophical errors condemned by the Popes, have tended to identify themselves with reactionary political regimes and social philosophies. Their abhorrence of the anti-religious spirit which poisoned, and unfortunately continues to poison, so much of the liberal outlook has blinded them to the genuinely spiritual and humanitarian values for which liberalism has fought. The result of this double misunderstanding has been the paradox of liberalism's frequently fighting the right battles for the wrong reasons, and Catholics reacting by fighting the wrong battles for the right reasons.

The Church condemned a philosophy of "Liberalism." By extending this to a blanket condemnation of liberals and everything for which they stand, Catholics condemn much that is properly their own, and in reaction espouse things which should be as repugnant to the Christian as they are to the liberal himself.

The outlook frequently described as that of the "liberal Catholic" believes that one of the great hopes for the future lies in the recovery and restoration to a Christian context of all things valuable and true. This does not imply any compromise of the Faith, any trafficking with the theological enemy. It does imply, however, that on many questions of political and social order the individual Catholic may find himself more in sympathy with the viewpoint commonly associated with liberalism than with the sterile reaction to liberal-

ism common among many of his fellow Catholics. Hence the "liberal Catholic" category to which he is frequently assigned. But he should not be afraid of labels, even though he may regret the fact that they are usually misleading and meaningless.

What is called "liberal Catholicism" is for the most part an attempt to work toward a new synthesis of the Church's unchanging truths with whatever good is to be found in the modern city of man. The "liberal Catholic" is, in the best instances, the twentieth century Catholic synthesist. He remembers the admonition of Saint Paul: "And now, brethren, all that rings true, all that commands reverence, all that makes for right, all that is pure, all that is lovely, all that is gracious in the telling; virtue and merit, wherever virtue and merit are found—let this be the argument of your thoughts."

It has been the high mission of liberalism to fight for much of what is right and true in the modern world, while those who should have aided, and even anticipated its battle, have stood aside, busy reviling "Liberalism" for its philosophical errors, and defending impossibly archaic political and social orders as a bulwark against its aberrations. "Liberalism," as its enemies point out, has indeed failed, and the future of our society will not be the easy utopia envisioned by its nineteenth century prophets. But its failure has been as a philosophy, not as a vision, and although the future may not lie in the liberal dream, any attempt to build a civilization from which the best elements of that dream are absent is foredoomed to failure. Unless Catholics become more and more aware of this, the phenomenon which Pius XI described as the tragedy of the nineteenth century may be repeated, and this time on an even more catastrophic scale. The Church may now lose not merely a class, but a whole world-in-the-making.

What the "liberal Catholic" pleads for is that Catholics should become as passionately dedicated to human dignity and freedom as the liberal has been. Liberalism may have fought its battles for the wrong reasons. The Catholic's mission should therefore be to redeem its struggle by supplying the right ones. The liberal may have advocated freedom of religion and the separation of civil and religious power because he is indifferent to absolute truth. Catholics should join him in advocating the same things because they insist on the absolute inviolability of the human conscience and the freedom of the act of faith. For the same reason they should share the liberal's aversion to censorship, suppression, and the arbitrary uses of temporal power in any effort to coerce the mind of man. History, as well as philosophy, should make them share the liberal's distaste for "calling the cops."

Unfortunately, tragically, the large implications of the lessons in political freedom and social equality

which liberalism has taught the modern world have yet to be completely absorbed into popular Catholic thinking. The "liberals" are not always the villains in the dénouement of modern culture. Those Catholics who have neglected that part of their Christian heritage which emphasizes human freedom and dignity, and who thus contributed to modern man's alienation from the Church, have also played their part. Their zeal to "protect" in a world where a narrow protection is no longer possible, their adamant refusal to repudiate any claim to special privilege in a pluralistic society, their slowness to realize the impossibilities of carrying-over methods of public coercion which may have had some justification in a united, sacral order, but which can only cause division and scandal in the modern lay

state—these are things which demand revaluation. . . .

This revaluation demands no sacrifice of whatever is essential to the Faith; it implies no surrender to relativism or secularism. Rather, it emphasizes what Cardinal Suhard pointed up as the Church's genius for eternal renewal. In order to build what is essential so that the Church may fulfil its mission in the modern world, there must exist a certain willingness to discard whatever of non-essential method and outlook has been carried over from a society which can never return. It is this affirmation, and this revaluation, always in the light of Catholic truth and subject to the guidance of the teaching Church, which the "liberal Catholic" asks of his fellow Catholics in the modern world.

July 12, 1952

A Question of Emphasis

by JOHN COGLEY

IT SEEMS to me that throughout my entire adult life Catholicism in this country has been obsessed with the question of Communism. When I was a kid of high-school age I heard about Communism from pulpit and platform until it came running out my ears. I heard it so much that the words used to condemn it became meaningless. Later, when I knew more about Catholic social teachings and recognized when Communism was condemned for the wrong reasons, I used to get mad. And for a few years when I was in daily contact with a long breadline in Chicago and scurrying around trying to get the food for it, I used to get disgusted when prominent Catholics met in swank hotels to condemn Communism and then later sat down to a six-course dinner and listened to more of the same from some over-upholstered stuffed shirt. I used to know a lot of Communists in those days, and I knew what they were up to while Catholics sat around making speeches and drafting resolutions.

I don't think I was alone in getting my belly full of anti-Communism. But if one were a Catholic and moved in Catholic circles, there was no avoiding it. As far as the temporal, external manifestations of faith were concerned (I speak roughly of the past fifteen years) it seemed to be mainly in opposition to Communism that we Catholics lived and moved and had our being. Anti-Communism colored almost everything we said and did.

When we heard about the social encyclicals it was stressed that they offered the best answer to Communism, as if that somehow made them more valid than they would otherwise be. When we organized study clubs, lecture courses, apostolic movements or inter-

racial meetings, we underlined the fact that these were effective anti-Communist measures. We sent our graduates out into the world with denunciations of Communism ringing in their ears. When we spoke of the need for Catholic Action, we invoked the fabulous zeal of young Communists as the clinching argument. Anti-Communism—good old, reliable old anti-Communism; you could never go wrong with it, especially if you kept it on black-and-white terms—was likely to explode anywhere. Even when we were called upon to contribute to a parish bazaar or sell chances on a Buick, we might learn suddenly that that too was really all part of the anti-Communist crusade.

In time anti-Communism became the one unfailing constant, the touchstone by which we made our judgments and determined to a great extent the political line we followed. If the Communists were for something, however good, we were generally against it. If the Party was against something, however bad, we were inclined to look for good in it and withhold our full denunciation. Many Catholics, for example, were antagonistic and slow to recognize the new C.I.O. because it was vociferously supported by the *Daily Worker* crowd. Some were late in turning on the evils of fascism—and still are—because the dictators too were anti-Communist.

Anti-Communism made some strange bed-fellows. During the past decade more than one reactionary columnist, writer or politico who represented a viewpoint thoroughly rejected in the papal encyclicals was invited to give the commencement talk at a Catholic college or to address a Catholic forum. They were vociferously anti-Communist, and that seemed to be

enough. From *Christian Frontiers* of 1940 to Senator McCarthy of 1950, it has often been enough for a man to be peddling anti-Communism to get sizable Catholic support. What else he had in his baggage never seemed to make much difference.

This is the way things have been for a long time. Because they have been this way, there has grown up two separate schools of thought among American Catholics. The minority—and it has always been a definite minority—have been critical, generally disapproving of the direction American Catholic life was taking, and—they have felt—have been rarely understood. They have been ridiculed, dismissed as finicky “intellectuals” and rather politely excluded from “respectable” Catholic company. In some cases, either from self-pity or a blameworthy disdain, they have excluded themselves. They have had their successes, sometimes at the cost of extreme sacrifice. But the majority group has gone its own way with little or no concern for the criticism and, at least as far as obvious influence goes, has had it all over the others.

Now, in this rather offhand treatment, I don't mean to say that either of the two groups is indifferent to Communism, or has ever been. It has always been a question of which way to go about fighting it.

The one group has stressed positive action. It has tried to devote more of its energies to the promulgation of Catholicism and Catholic social thought than to conscious anti-Communism. Members of this group are the ones who opened houses of hospitality for the poor in the depression thirties, and interracial centers in Harlem and Chicago's Bronzeville, for instance. They were the ones who made coffee at strike headquarters, where the Communists were also present, and marched in picket lines. Priests among them sometimes espoused unpopular or—in the eyes of their fellow-Catholics—dubious causes. They got themselves reputations as “radicals,” offended some of the most influential anti-Communists in the country, and used most of the energy that might have gone into sheer anti-Communism in self-criticism of our own failures, compromises and manifestations of materialism. Much of their time, too

AUTHORS—II

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—unfortunately but necessarily—was used to defend themselves from charges made against them by fellow Catholics who felt that they were betraying the real social task of the Church—the quick destruction of Communism. The minority however always insisted that Communism was a manifestation of a greater disease, and the thing to do was destroy it in ourselves first.

The minority held on through the years. . . . Even today, they feel that the emphasis on anti-Communism during the past decade and a half was largely wasted energy and, in many cases, added up to a distortion not only of the Church's real social position, but of Christianity itself. For what it's worth to say it, I place myself among them. I think that, generally speaking, the long anti-Communist crusade of American Catholics has been a failure.

If we have learned anything from the recent history of Communism, it is that the Marxist movement is dynamic. That seems to be the only word: *dynamic*. It has shown it has the power of religion to move millions and to call forth human loyalties, heroisms and sacrifice that might otherwise have gone untapped. It is able to inspire, to invigorate, to sweep across a people—as it has in Asia—and feed on the highest aspirations of the human person. It cannot be driven out of existence by half-way measures. We can—and should—protect ourselves from it by force of arms and all the means at our disposal, but we cannot drive it out of existence that way. It is in its way an absolute, and it will be driven out of existence only with another absolute. It has the force and appeal of religion, and only another equally dynamic religion can replace it.

Communism can be finally destroyed by the appeal that Christianity itself can make. We have heard it said time and again that in our faith we had the answer to Communism, but it was a pulpit platitude whose full meaning was lost upon us. In the face of Communism, we were not willing to put our trust in that faith. We were not prepared really to believe that a crust of bread given in the name of Christ was of more social value than an anti-Communist law.

And now we are sending out our young soldiers—half-materialists ourselves, suffering from the same disease that has taken over the Communist half of the world—to meet the dynamism of Marx. We are scurrying around now to discover what dynamism we can find in our own answer to Communism. The President speaks bravely of the Sermon on the Mount, but it sounds hollow and forced, and we all know it.

We have not given America what we had to give, we Catholics. And though we may boast that we warned the nation about Communism long ago, I still think we must admit that our long anti-Communist crusade was a failure. We gave too little time to Christianity itself.

July 21, 1950

III—The Challenge of the Specific

Criticism of the United Nations

by ✕ ROBERT E. LUCEY

TEN years after the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, the fundamental facts of international relations remain the same. We live in an interdependent world, a world society, however divided its people and governments. An interdependent world needs organization to live up to its interdependence, maintain peace everywhere, provide for the common defense, establish justice and promote its general welfare. The United Nations is its existing organization. . . .

A significant set of American attitudes towards the U.N. centers around the criticism that the U.N. and its Declaration of Human Rights do not recognize God. Obviously the criticism points out a serious defect in the Charter. Above all else the nations need God. Yet a preamble could have been written dedicating the Charter to the one God or even the Triune God and still be the preface to a Charter even weaker than the one we have, or the preface to a Charter of the type that Pope Pius XII condemned in praising world federalism. For things are done in the name of God honestly and correctly, and honestly and incorrectly, and dishonestly and incorrectly: for example, Pius XI's Encyclical against the Nazis accused them of using the name of God "rhetorically."

The difficulty here is not in saying that the Charter should declare that the origin of both authority and human rights is ultimately God. The real difficulty lies in making so much of God's absence from the Charter as to give scandal to the weak who then go on to think that a Charter without God's name in it is of no use whatsoever. Such an attitude fails, of course, to take American history into account. For our own Constitution and Bill of Rights make no reference at all to God. And yet in His mercy He has helped us to become a great nation. We do some things well.

This defect in the U.N. documents is not the fault of Russia alone. Countries presumably Christian, presumably Catholic, sent representatives to the U.N. who would have none of God. In the strange world we live in—physically one, and yet mentally so distorted—it is probable that only Mohammedan countries would cast an all-but-solid vote for proclaiming God as the author of power and the source of rights. Surely, united nations that do not jointly recognize God as the source of their joint power offer no certain hope of keeping world peace and promoting world welfare. But that lack in the preamble of the Charter and in the U.N. Declaration of Rights, it should be remembered, is the fault of the governments and peoples who created the U.N. Charter and Declaration of Rights. As of now, there remains to us our own dedication under God to the U.N. and its good principles as steps towards something better, praying, also, for its present success—as we do dedicate ourselves to and pray for our own country and its Constitution, which is "godless"—and at the same time trying to amend both the U.N. Charter and our Constitution in this as well as other respects.

The fact that the U.N.'s Declaration of Human Rights is good, and even better than our own Bill of Rights, often gets lost in the criticism that the U.N.'s Declaration does not declare the divine origin of rights. The criticism leaves the presumption in people's minds that the U.N. Declaration is bad. Yet the Declaration actually states the inherent character of rights and thus puts them above the category of mere legal and government-given privileges—something which is not stated, although it is implicit, in our Constitution about our own rights. The U.N. Declaration proclaims, too, the prior right of parents to the education of their children; thus it states something true

that our own Constitution does not say, even if our Supreme Court has discovered it there. And the U.N. Declaration includes social and economic rights far beyond anything found in our own Constitution.

In reality the U.N.'s Declaration of Human Rights is a clear advance in the formulation of specific rights. Yet this fact gets lost in the criticism of "godlessness" even though the very same criticism is true of the less adequate United States Bill of Rights. All this adds, along with the drive for the Bricker Amendment and other proposals and criticisms looking to a diminished U.N., to the unpreparedness of our people and our government to meet the need of so amending the U.N. Charter as to make it adequate. One should also note another important point. It should be obvious that enemies of social and economic rights here at home use for their own purpose the argument from the "godlessness" of the Charter and the Constitution. . . .

Sometimes the search for perfection blinds us to the fact that a gradual growth towards perfection in political and economic relations without ever reaching it is probably—one may say, certainly—all that is possible. The Genocide Convention, for example, makes it an international crime to destroy a people's national, racial, religious or ethnic character and culture. Why any American should oppose it or why any Catholic anywhere should condemn it is a profound mystery, except that the Genocide Convention might be considered not perfect. Yet why expect perfection in the first place? Why be moved by an argument that something only ninety per cent good, or only seventy-five per cent, is therefore unacceptable? If it is a laudable thing to seek the best, it is also praiseworthy to accept and work for the good, if that is all that can be reached. . . .

July 8, 1955

The Communist Threat

IF COMMUNISM were only an idea, competing with such religious ideals as Christianity offers and such political ideals of freedom as are incarnated in our own democracy, the situation would be a whole lot clearer than it is. The anti-Communist's task, in that case, though no less difficult would at least be clear-cut. But the fact that behind the Marxist idea a powerful political and military force stands ready to move on orders complicates things tremendously.

It means that while with one hand we counter the Marxist with bread, we have been forced to carry a gun in the other. It means that we have had to make military and political liaisons with some of the hated symbols of reaction. It means that we have had to stand as those who urge self-defense (with all that means: cannons, guns, armies, possible wars, and less rather than more butter) while the Communist cries "Peace, peace!" It means that much as we might want our message to be that of a savior it is necessarily spoken in military accents, and masses of people are left wondering where the savior leaves off and the soldier begins.

This is too bad, of course. But as long as Communism is a political and military force as well as an idea at large in the world, it can not be otherwise. We stand in a difficult, dangerous position. By succeeding brilliantly on one front of the anti-Communist war, we are likely to lose completely on the other. If we neglect one in order to strengthen the other—accent the military at the expense of building up the kind of social order where Communism will no longer be provided with

such fertile ground to take root in—we fall into a trap. If we minimize the military in order to put all our efforts into the "positive approach," we fall into another. A balance between "negative" and "positive" anti-Communism must be maintained. We have to lean heavily on both soldier and saint. . . .

Editorial
April 4, 1952

THE issue before the nation is one of survival. The major threat to that survival is posed by the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union were to attack this nation tomorrow—if there were another Pearl Harbor, in Japan, in Alaska, in Detroit or New York—the U.S. would find the money to defend itself. U.S. citizens would work longer hours, they would do without, they would pay taxes on a scale beyond their present wildest nightmares. Doing all these things would not be easy, but they would be done, because the survival of the U.S. as a free nation would be at stake.

Nothing has happened to remove the threat of such an attack upon us or upon our allies. Why, then, are we now to ease up on our defense efforts? Why are we now being told that "defense expenditures must be cut to fit the cloth"?

The soothing phrases from Washington tend to obscure these hard facts: The U.S. is slackening its efforts. The draft call is scheduled to be cut in half. The Voice of America budget is being revised sharply downward, with broadcasts in many languages being dropped completely. Plans for the development of the Air Force are

to be cut back. Military aid for our allies is to be pruned. A new general staff is to be brought in . . . with the object of taking a new, and smaller-scale, look at the needs for military appropriations. In spite of all the anti-Communist campaign oratory—which continues to this day—the truth is that military muscle, not fat, is being cut.

Editorial
May 29, 1953

PEACE seems to be breaking out all over. The Russians are smiling at us and we, somewhat shyly, are beginning to smile back at them. In the newspapers we see pictures of the Messrs. Bulganin, Khrushchev and Malenkov sipping martinis at a Fourth of July party in Moscow, and of Mr. Molotov posing in a ten gallon hat on his trip to San Francisco. After these, one is almost prepared to see pictures of Mr. Dulles performing a peasant dance at some collective farm celebration in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Eisenhower, on the day of his departure for Geneva, told the nation that he was going “to attempt with my colleagues to change the spirit that has characterized the intergovernmental relationships of the world during the past ten years.” From the international conferences held during this period, he said, one ingredient has been missing—“an honest attempt to conciliate, to understand, to be tolerant, to try to see the other fellow’s viewpoint as well as we see our own.”

“I say to you,” the President continued, “if we can change the spirit in which these conferences are conducted, we will have taken the greatest step toward peace, toward future prosperity and tranquillity that has ever been taken in the history of mankind.”

These are remarkable words. Who had thought that Mr. Eisenhower could speak the language of 1942 so easily? Who had expected a Republican President to charge his Democratic predecessors with being *hard* on Communism? And yet this charge seems evident in the President’s talk about our past failure “to see the other fellow’s point of view as well as we see our own” and his belief that to remedy this failure is to take a great step toward peace.

Thus, on the eve of the Geneva Conference, we heard from the White House the beguiling language of peaceful coexistence, and this language sounds as dangerously unreal as was the language of “massive retaliation” we heard from the White House such a short time ago. Under Mr. Truman we pursued a policy of “containment,” and the Republicans said this was not “dynamic” enough: what we needed, they argued, was a policy of “liberation.” But now, after three years in office, a Republican President speaks not of liberation—nor even of containment—but of conciliation: we will, he says, “be tolerant because this nation does not seek to impose our way of life upon others . . .

we will extend the hand of friendship to all who will grasp it honestly and concede to us the same rights, the same understanding, the same freedom that we accord to them.” A great change has obviously taken place, and as we await the results from Geneva it might be well for us to re-examine what is involved in it.

This magazine’s position on Soviet-American relations has often been misunderstood. . . . On the one hand, we have consistently argued that modern war is no solution to the world’s problems, that a resort to it is unthinkable, and that diplomacy, no matter how limited its achievements, must remain our major instrument in the cold war. Some form of mutual survival with the Soviet, we have said, is for the foreseeable future the world’s only alternative to disaster. And because we have said this, certain of our critics on the right have suggested that we are “soft on Communism.”

On the other hand, we have stated that in the present world situation this nation has no choice but to maintain a large military establishment as a deterrent to Soviet aggression. We have defended the paradox that if the world is to have peace the West must be prepared in certain situations to risk war. We have warned against any illusions regarding world Communism’s ultimate intentions: they remain, we have said, subversion, slavery, and death. For this, certain of our critics on the left have called us “pro-war.”

We have insisted, in short, that the struggle against world Communism cannot be solved by war, but that it cannot be solved, either, by refusing to recognize the struggle for what it is—a hostility that can have no end as long as Communism remains what it is. Our full diplomatic efforts must be exerted toward lessening the immediate dangers of war, towards seeking whatever compromises we can honorably come to with the Communist powers. We must be flexible and we must be non-dogmatic in our search for some *modus vivendi* between the two worlds.

But in some things the crusading anti-Communists are profoundly right: we can never be “tolerant” of a system which enslaves millions of human beings; we can never “understand” regimes which practice calculated deceit; we cannot “try to see” the viewpoint of those who have made systematic murder a cornerstone of their policy and totalitarian terror their pattern for domination of the world. . . .

In his Christmas address of last year Pope Pius XII stated that “the principal foundation on which the present state of relative calm rests is fear. Each of the groups into which the human family is divided tolerates the existence of the other because it does not wish itself to perish.” This state of things the Pope called coexistence in fear—and this is the only kind of coexistence the world seems fated to have for a long time to come—if it is to have any coexistence at all.

There is, it seems to us, a fundamental illusion be-

hind talk of negotiating with the Soviet Union when it has proven its "sincerity." The Soviet Union can prove its sincerity only by ceasing to be, in any recognizable form, the Soviet Union. When the slave labor camps are abolished, when the terror is eliminated, when the satellites are free, then we can talk of "sincerity." In the meantime we must negotiate from strength, knowing all the time the enemy we face, even though the mask he wears may be friendly. In this knowledge, and only there, lies a chance for justice and peace.

Editorial
July 29, 1955

ONCE UPON A TIME the world was divided into two armed camps. On one side was a coalition of free nations. On the other was the Communist empire, directed and controlled by the U.S.S.R. With these two great powers contending over the shape of the future, men had to make their choice between them.

Religiously-oriented people had for a long time been more conscious than others of the threat of Soviet domination; to them the persecution of religion and the death of freedom under Communist regimes was an old story. From the beginning, therefore, there was no doubt where they stood.

As time went on, in fact, it became difficult for many people to be anti-Communist enough for some religious publications. Almost anything that was put forward as anti-Communism was sure to win their uncritical support; almost anyone who called himself an anti-Communist was a hero. Any editor of this school knew that liberals were "soft on Communism." He knew that what the U.S. needed was bigger and better Congressional investigations, and less of this nonsense about American traditions and civil liberties. He had no time for people he referred to as "bleeding-hearts" or "do-gooders" or, more politely, as anti-anti-Communists.

All this naturally made for considerable domestic dissension, but at least one good result might have been expected. Surely the anti-Communist writers and publications would line up solidly behind the anti-Communist measures of the United States government; surely they could be counted on to back anti-Communist measures abroad, measures which had the support of most leaders in both political parties at home. But life is not that simple, and things did not work out that way.

First there was the Marshall Plan, which was the forerunner for a general Western strategy of using economic power against the Communists in crucial overseas areas. . . . It could not be proved, of course, but most experts thought that if the Marshall Plan had not existed at least part of Western Europe would have come under Soviet rule. Did the Marshall Plan and the succeeding mutual security and foreign aid programs have the support of all the "real" anti-Communists?

Hardly. Foreign spending was described by phrases like "Operation Rathole," and the whole idea of foreign aid was denounced as a Communist plot to make us spend our way into bankruptcy.

By 1958 matters had reached a crucial stage. In the year that Russia demonstrated its superiority in missile development and also stepped up its program of economic warfare overseas, the President of the United States asked less than four billion dollars for the nation's mutual security program. Most of this was to be used for military or defense aid, and he warned that any sharp reduction would mean higher defense spending at home and would eventually leave this country virtually alone in a world dominated by Russian and Chinese Communism. Nonetheless, his supporters in Congress immediately said the President would be lucky if his request was not slashed by more than twenty-five per cent.

Why would the President have such a hard time getting the money he needed for the mutual security program? One reason, certainly, was the constant criticism of all foreign aid programs, not in the Communist press, but in the anti-Communist press.

Consider, for example, the case of Father Richard Ginder in *Our Sunday Visitor*, a Catholic weekly which has a circulation well up into the hundreds of thousands. To Father Ginder, anything that can be classified as foreign aid is a program of "handouts" aimed at "losing friends and alienating people," to use his own phrase. In 1957 Father Ginder urged his readers to "keep hammering at 'foreign aid.' That is the expenditure that is in greatest part senseless and loaded with chiselers." Neither sputnik nor anything else managed to change his mind since then. In the February 9th issue of the *Visitor* he devoted his entire column to what he called the "Billion-dollar Boondoggle." One sentence was memorable: "When we read that the Government's Foreign Giveaway Program now totals roughly \$67-billion, the mind staggers in stupidity. . . ."

Sixty-seven billion dollars is a lot of money. It must include the entire cost of the Marshall Plan in Western Europe, which alone amounted to thirteen billion dollars. It must include aid to Formosa and South Korea, as well as embattled Viet Nam; it must have paid for the successful fight against Communism in Greece, the strengthening of Turkey and just about the entire national struggle against Communism overseas since 1945. Yes, sixty-seven billion dollars is a huge sum—so huge, in fact, that it was roughly the equivalent of what Americans spent on movie and theater tickets and recreational goods in the same period of time.

Similarly, President Eisenhower's proposed mutual security "giveaway" in 1958 is again a terrible sum—about as much, in fact, as Americans normally spend in one year on radio and T.V. sets and phono-

graph records. No wonder Father Ginder and those who think like him have engaged in a crusade to save America from national bankruptcy and the ultimate triumph of Communism. And how annoying it must be to them that there are still people around who cannot see their point of view.

How stupid those who say the United States is financially able to spend the equivalent of one year's cigarette money for the President's mutual security program! And how rash those people, like the editors

of this magazine, who venture to suggest that the richest nation in the world might even expand this program to the point at which it would cost as much as the annual bill for cigarettes *and* movies, together. Obviously, such people must be mad, or worse. Perhaps they are not even anti-Communist at all. After all, if *Our Sunday Visitor* is not an anti-Communist publication, what is?

Editorial
March 7, 1958

Shadow of the Bomb

POWER corrupts what? For one thing, it corrupts intellects, because force offers a simple (costly, yes, but simple) method of action in situations where intellectual and social action would be complex and tedious. And an atmosphere of dependence upon power is something like an atmosphere of mustard gas: not much else survives. That is the reason the present American foreign policy has a fragile basis. If public opinion in the U.S. should be stampeded, if we fail to preserve steady nerves, the policy will collapse. . . .

How far can power go? Uncomprehending power. Force is useful so long as it is a tool of policy. It is the sword by which the wielder dies when it is used without understanding; when an essential means becomes the only means. The fact about Communism is that it is a perversion of a good, and an exploitation of injustice. It answers the call of the thirsty, even though it does it with sea-water. It is not, then, answered and silenced by force. . . .

The dilemma of the situation is that increased military power is now absolutely necessary. Yet we have to walk the knife edge, building material power, and still refusing to permit our minds and our faith to be corrupted by the power we control. For Communism itself cannot be shot between the eyes. But, if that belief, fatal simplification that it is, should grow in this country, and should undermine the policy of military defenses plus economic and social reconstruction that the United States has dedicated itself to, then we would be likely to find that force is useless, for what we would defend would be ashes.

William Pfaff
October 20, 1950

THERE was a certain note of inevitability about the news that the H-bomb had been translated from theory into fact. Once word had been received that the Russians had produced an atomic explosion of their own, President Truman gave the word

to go ahead on the H-bomb. After that step was taken, somehow everyone took it pretty much for granted that the scientists would be successful in producing the new and terrible weapon and, apparently, produce it they did.

If anyone could feel sure that the H-bomb would act as an effective check to war, there would undoubtedly be widespread rejoicing over this latest discovery. But this is a confidence no one seems to feel. In any arms race there is very little security, and this is particularly true when the stakes are possession of a bomb which must itself be triggered by the lethal A-bomb. What little comfort can be had from such a deadly competition derives only from staying one jump ahead, and sometimes even that achievement seems to pose more problems than it solves.

No doubt a good part of the public apathy about the H-bomb derives from the conviction that no one really knows what it portends. But what is known for certain is that the H-bomb is a weapon of awesome power with a destroying radius of ten miles. If applied to cities, it would constitute a weapon of total annihilation, and there is apparently no theoretical limit on its size.

In all honesty, one cannot rejoice at the latest accomplishment of modern science. At best, it is only possible to say that if there had to be an H-bomb, it is better for the world (in spite of Hiroshima) that the United States possess it than Russia. But the unsolved, and at this time apparently insoluble, question is what happens after the Russians also have the H-bomb.

Editorial
December 5, 1952

THE WORLD today is confronted with a unique situation. The power of the H-bomb is so monstrous that it is hard for the human mind to

comprehend it. Given the right wind-direction, for example, the fall-out from a single H-bomb could wipe out the entire population of Long Island. It could blanket with its fatal fog almost the entire area of New Jersey. Two dozen H-bombs could kill fifty million men, women and children in the United States. A relatively small number of bombs could render England uninhabitable; a similar number could turn Western Europe into a desert.

In view of all this, one fatal misstep could make the civilization we know a thing of the past. Some scientists even fear that the cumulative effect of "too many" H-bombs would be the total destruction of the human race. Certainly, a thousand years of history can now be erased overnight.

Yet describing the horrors of the H-bomb does not give the complete picture. The face of the Soviet is clear and monstrous. Communism probes here and there in the underbelly of the Western world, seeking for soft spots. Wherever it can, its armies strike, and freedom dies. Even with the threat of the H-bomb, can one advise surrender to enslavement and tyranny? We certainly will not, cannot.

What, then, remains? The West must avoid enslavement. It must also, if that is possible, avoid the tragedy of H-bomb warfare.

Achieving this dual purpose is not easy. Under such circumstances foreign policy does not tend to be dramatic. There are no quick rescues, no easy solutions. No guarantee of success exists, even in achieving limited goals. The major efforts tend to be directed toward a preservation of peace and the status quo, as far as that is possible. This is not pleasant. No free man, for instance, likes the idea that other men are captive behind the Iron Curtain. We certainly do not, but we have to admit we know no way by which their release can now be accomplished. The West can harass, it can broadcast, it can spread leaflets; all such things may help a little. Men in the West must remain morally indignant over the fate of men enslaved. But they must remember the H-bomb cannot set them free.

What of the future? Our vision is limited, as is that of other men. We see no prospect of any sudden easing of tension. We see no chance that the Russians will forget how to make the H-bomb or that they will tomorrow lie down like lambs. We see no bright prospects. We can hope and look for internal dissension in the ruling clique inside Russia, plus failure in the system itself, with all the possibilities that this would bring. But right now all we see is a chance to choose, not one clear good, but between various evils.

This course demands patience. It demands strength. It means building up so the Soviet Union can find no weak spots when it probes. It means more money for

arms, not less. It means attention to conventional weapons as well as to the new arms, with the hope of keeping war to brush-fire rather than H-bomb proportions. It also means recognition that moral indignation and practical power, unfortunately, are two different things; that there are some evils in the world against which we are now powerless to move without producing greater evils. This policy means, we fear, preferring a world that is considerably less than perfect to no world at all. This is not much of a choice, but it is the only one we see.

Editorial
March 4, 1955

THE terrible difference between Christian Hope and the world's fulfillment has never been more starkly pointed up than at this Eastertime. While the Church sings *Alleluia*, exulting in the triumph of Life, the world prepares for death. "This is a holiday of the Lord's own choosing; greet this day with rejoicing, greet this day with triumph," the Church bids Christians. But, "we are burning daylight; the darkness is coming on in the East," an American Senator warns the world. . . .

Alexander Pope did not realize how very true it is that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. We have a little knowledge of thermonuclear weapons—enough to know how to make them, enough, perhaps, to poison the atmosphere and make life on this planet impossible—and we have thus brought a new force, a new determinant, into history. But we have not yet learned to take account of this new force in our practical calculations. We continue to think in terms that the new force has made meaningless—terms like "war" and "retaliation" and "victory." Our logic is still the logic of bullets, and we place ourselves in situations where bullets might have saved us. But no great power can stop at bullets these days; we know that we will not. And thus we prepare the world to be a cemetery.

Facing this, what should be the Christian's attitude? With his certainty of final triumph guaranteed by Christ's Resurrection, with his sure knowledge that, in the end, all will be well, what should be his judgment on this world as it prepares its funeral pyre? "The earth trembles and is silent when God rises up to execute His sentence," we read in the Offertory of the Easter Mass. It is easy for the Christian to take comfort in this. What might soon befall the world can be considered God's sentence on the world. For the secular humanist the destruction of his civilization is the final, unthinkable, unbearable defeat. It is The End. But the Christian has always known that here is no abiding city, that God's judgment lies upon it. He knows too that this world's destruction would not be The End. And so he may, at this Eastertime, be

tempted to write off a world which seems, in any event, already to have written off itself. He may feel that all he can now do is retreat to the Absolute.

But such an attitude would betray the Christian vocation, which is not to abandon but to save the world. The Christian cannot allow himself the luxury of despair even when the darkness seems everywhere about. He cannot merely retreat to his own certainties and fortify himself against disaster with his ultimate optimism. Christ wept over the things that were to come upon Jerusalem. His followers too must concern themselves with their time and place. Knowing that, in the final sense, everything depends on God, they must still act as though everything depended on them. Realizing the evil at

work in modern history, and its probable results, they must yet avoid withdrawal from the world—leaving it to its own devices.

This civilization may indeed be lost beyond all human retrieving but we cannot act as if it were. In the gathering darkness we must continue to seek some light, some new path, some way out of the night. Here the Easter hope can sustain us as we pray in the words of the feast's Collect: "God, Who on this day through Thy only begotten Son hast vanquished death and unlocked for us the gate of everlasting life: help us to fulfill the longings Thou hast Thyself planted in our hearts."

Editorial
April 8, 1955

The McCarthy Era

GOODNESS diffuses itself, Aquinas taught. In a way, as it is with the rotten apple, the same might be said of evil. And here is the unavoidable dilemma facing anyone who has come to grips with the nihilism of the age: how to fight fire with fire without setting everything ablaze.

There is a kind of ironic victory that the nihilist can have, even when like Hitler he lies dead in the debris of the destruction he caused and his generals are actually drafting the terms of surrender. It is the victory of those who have turned peaceful men into men of violence, thoughtful men into blindly angry opponents—the victory of those who hate the light and have brought other men to stumble around in their darkness.

Mussolini tasted this bitter triumph, though he died a disgraced and defeated man hanging from a lamp post. The Duce taught his sons to "live dangerously" and to feed on violence. When one of them spoke poetically of the savage beauty of glowing cities and burning bodies seen from a death-dealing plane, Americans were properly disgusted. But before he died, Mussolini could have seen that kind of killing in a thousand American newspapers and heard the same sentiments expressed by a thousand U.S. fliers.

When Franco's planes dropped bombs on heavily populated cities, American public opinion was outraged. That was in the late thirties. Within a few years our own Air Force had become the real master of obliteration bombing.

There was the shock of Pearl Harbor one Sunday afternoon, a day of infamy. Less than four years later the headlines screamed Hiroshima.

That is the way it goes. . . . Even the fairly young

man today has lived long enough to know several different Americas. The changes that took place between the time when Bruno Mussolini's poems revolted Americans and the years when Hollywood showed clean-cut AAF men smiling contentedly after they dropped their loads on Cologne or Dusseldorf were not deliberately chosen. They were the indirect work of our enemies.

Something like that is happening now. Still another America may be coming into being, one indirectly created by the conspiratorial mentality of the Kremlin. The London *Economist* has referred to the first half of 1950 as our "months of degradation." It has been a time of confusion and general suspicion, such as must exist in the always-threatened police state, and of frustration. The enemy may be anyone, anywhere and the temptation is to swing out wildly and blindly, forgetting the safeguards provided by the maddeningly slow, laborious processes of law. The temptation has been to make the accused prove their innocence, to salvage their reputations, before the courts have pronounced them guilty, and to grow weary with judicial procedure. The American courts in every case have been scrupulously just in dealing with those accused of betrayal or treason. But the popular tendency is to anticipate the courts, to pre-judge the accused, in the public press and the public forum, on the basis of what may turn out to be coincidence, circumstantial evidence, non-conformism or mere assertion.

The Hiss conviction and the Fuchs case shocked Americans profoundly. We, who never feared before, learned for the first time what a fifth column could mean in terms of betrayal and survival. The natural first reaction was near-panic and, consequently, the

nagging temptation to lose faith in ourselves and our own ways.

For months now the spotlight has been held by men like Whittaker Chambers and Louis Budenz who speak another language than the one we are used to: men who because of their backgrounds and personal histories accept treason and conspiracy as almost normal social phenomena. The ascent of these deadly serious informers who have emerged from the conspiratorial darkness, and of Senator Joe McCarthy in the role of reckless, irresponsible bogey-man have set the mood of the day. Where there is fear and suspicion the tendency is to react emotionally and blindly, and in time, if the mood persists long enough, the voice of reason may be stilled forever.

Editorial
June 2, 1950

FROM 1950 until today The Commonweal has been a consistent opponent of Wisconsin's junior Senator. . . . But we have insisted all along that this was not a "Catholic" fight, that in it no Catholic had a right to involve the Church. Thus when certain of Senator McCarthy's critics urged the Bishops of this country to go on record as condemning the Senator we said, in a lead-editorial, that such urgings were highly ill-advised, that this was a struggle in which the Church must not be asked to commit herself—on either side.

We are sure that the great majority of American Catholics agree with us on this point, whatever their opinion of Mr. McCarthy may be. Unfortunately, a small but vociferous—and fanatical—group of Senator McCarthy's Catholic followers have not agreed, but have attempted to tie the cause of religion to the cause of the Senator. These people, inveterate letter-writers and petition-signers that they are, have made a noise all out of proportion to their numbers and have created sufficient mischief to convince some people that Catholics are in fact en masse behind McCarthyism. Nothing . . . could be worse for the cause of Catholicism than the furthering of this myth. For to bind the Church to the temporal fortunes of men—whether they be heroes or demagogues—is to betray the Church.

Those who would bind the Church to the declining fortunes of Mr. McCarthy, however, seem to have been particularly active recently and, untypical as their efforts may be, they can yet do limitless damage to the Church. For example, as much as one would like to, it does not seem possible to doubt reports that petitions against censuring Senator McCarthy have been circulated by teachers in a few Catholic schools around the country, that some official parish organizations have pushed these petitions as a form of "Catholic Action," and that a few priests have spoken against censure from their pulpits. These things have happened, and they have, justly, caused scandal.

We believe that adequate grounds for censuring Senator McCarthy exist, but we would oppose the circulation of a censure petition under official or semi-official Catholic auspices quite as strongly as we oppose and deplore the pro-McCarthy activities which are taking place under such auspices now. . . . When such things happen, it must be made clear by other Catholics that they represent only an ill-advised few and in no way involve the whole of Catholic opinion on Senator McCarthy, opinion which, happily, remains divided the way such debatable things should be. What should unite Catholics, regardless of their opinions, is a determination not to involve the Church.

Editorial
December 10, 1954

THE DEATH of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy has removed from the national scene a man who will long be a symbol of certain political forces and methods in American life. In a sense Joseph McCarthy was an instrument as well as an agent of these forces. For in a particularly convulsive period of American political life, the people found in him a focus for their anxieties, discontents and fears. McCarthy aroused deep and strong loyalties, and equally deep and strong hostilities. While he was a political power, there was a cleavage in our society which could not be bridged by previous commitments to party, country, or religion.

The bitter rancor, hatred and suspicion of this period are slowly receding. That deep division in our society, that crippling wound, is slowly healing. For after the Army-McCarthy hearings and the Senate censure the power of the McCarthy legend dwindled with the startling suddenness of a deflated balloon. Already there are those who would minimize the phenomenon of McCarthyism. It was, they suggest, a temporary violence that generated its own destruction. This attitude, we believe, is a mistaken one. It makes too little of a person and a phenomenon that severely tested the fabric of our democratic society, that showed forth its strengths and its weaknesses.

There were, we think, too few articulate voices opposed to McCarthyism when it was a power to reckon with. It touched and swayed the highest offices in the country. It made light of checks and balances. Although it has faded, it has left its mark. We do it less than justice if we forget that it is a political possibility never finally exorcised.

The Commonweal early opposed McCarthyism because the editors believed that it embodied a simplistic approach to ethics and politics. Truth and falsehood, good and evil are not so neatly divided and measured as McCarthyism implied. The evil of Communism can not justify every action nor determine every attitude of its adversaries. Differences in prudential political judg-

ments are inevitable; they are not sufficient to justify charges of treason. On those grounds we vigorously opposed Senator McCarthy and the movement bearing his name.

The death of such a man does not permit a silent notice. Nor does the pious Latin proverb, "of the dead, nothing but good," provide an adequate response. No man is wholly good, and to isolate the good is to dismember the man. But neither is he totally bad, and to judge any man so is inhuman arrogance and a disservice

to the truth. However harsh it may sound to some secular ears, no Catholic can fail to believe that by McCarthy's death we are all diminished.

As he was the symbol of McCarthyism we opposed him unalterably. As he was a towering immediate fact of a complex era, we leave more objective judgment to the future. As he was a man we pray for him. May he rest in peace.

Editorial
May 17, 1957

Protestant-Catholic Relations

FOR the Catholic, in contrast to the Protestant conscience which is not in union with Rome, the *immediate* object of all effort at reunion can only be that each according to his powers should help to remove the obstacles which are keeping those who do not believe in her from Mother Church.

For these obstacles are his responsibility as well. It is not as though it were only the non-Catholic Christian who was the guilty party while the Catholic could think of himself as completely innocent and magnanimously proffering forgiveness. Both are at fault, and this fault extends to Rome itself. . . .

When therefore the Holy See regards as one of its gravest and most urgent tasks the restoration of unity to Christendom—not only with the Orthodox Churches, which already have the essentials of dogma, cult and organization in common with it, but also with the Protestant communions—it is thereby fulfilling not only the duty of the Good Shepherd setting out in pursuit of the lost sheep but also the special duty of common penance and expiation.

Furthermore, it is not as if it were only the Protestants who are needy and the Catholics who are rich, overflowing with abundance and therefore able to wait contentedly until their starving brethren knock on their door. When these large portions of the Catholic Church were lost to her, she lost with them all those precious constructive powers, all those souls of deep religious aspiration who have since then worked so fruitfully and creatively within the separated communions, and who might have been called to cultivate the most perfect flowers of religious life upon Catholic soil. . . .

Trusting love, loving trust must be the animating principle of all our relations with each other, and especially of our religious literature and religious discussion. For where true love is, "love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith" (1 Tim. I. 5), there, and only there, is the Holy Ghost.

We pray God that this spirit of openness of heart and trusting love may be active and fruitful also in those upon whom God's dispensation has laid the heavy duty of preserving the purity of the faith handed down by the Church. May they all keep for their guiding thread the prayer instituted by the Holy See for reunion with the Oriental Churches: "We pray thee, O Lord . . . keep us from any fault that might estrange us yet further."

Karl Adam
August 10, 1951

ONE of the main difficulties in the way of better Catholic-Protestant understanding is that the two churches have a common vocabulary but a disparate theology. Even when Catholic and Protestant are using the same words they sometimes have different meanings in mind, and the confusion leads controversy up a blind alley. Thus when a Protestant speaks of "the Church" he usually means the spiritual unity of sincere Christian believers, of whatever denominational or theological persuasion. The Catholic, on the other hand, is much more specific. When he speaks of the Church he means the visible society of baptized persons in communion with the Pope.

The basic theological understanding of the nature of the Church, of what role it should play in the world and of how it should be organized, indeed *if* it should be organized at all, differs between Catholic and Protestant. And from our separate understandings of the Church flow distinct understandings of the function of the clergy. When a Protestant is talking about his minister and a Catholic is talking about his priest, they are speaking of men who, by the nature of things, are ordained to perform quite different spiritual functions, though they may share many of the same concerns for their flocks.

A great deal of light might be shed on religious

controversy if each took the other's theological understanding into consideration before making judgments. Then we would not have the present situation where, for instance, Catholics, applying their own understanding of the teaching Church, are shocked that Protestants of quite different (and sometimes contradictory) persuasions share each other's pulpits, while Protestants, applying *their* understanding of "the Church," are disturbed because the Catholic Church is emphatically hierarchical and 'undemocratic,' or remains aloof from inter-faith movements, holding that return to Rome is the only way to Christian unity.

In the one case, the Catholic is prone to make too much of the seeming illogic involved, the seeming unconcern for truth. "How can you all teach something different and still speak of unity?" he sometimes asks in scorn. But, according to the Protestant concept of the *Una Sancta*, there is no internal inconsistency or illogic. Again, the Protestant is often too quick to ascribe the Catholic Church's withdrawal from ecumenicism as sheer arrogance. But when he does, he is losing sight of just what the Catholic understands by "the Church."

Many of our troubles seem to stem from this fact that Protestants are often judged by Catholic standards and found seriously wanting, while Catholics judged by Protestant standards, are likewise found woefully remiss. Sometimes it seems necessary to say it: Catholics are not good Protestants and Protestants are not good Catholics, and nobody should be shocked that this is the way things are.

Editorial
February 1, 1952

AS CATHOLICS we are claiming the "holon", the whole, we are tending toward it. That is why we call ourselves "*kat-hol-ikoi*"—Catholics. Our attitude is affirmative, receptive, not exclusive and sectarian. We have tried to digest Plato and Aristotle, Hebrew and Hellenic, Roman, Germanic and Celtic cultures. At present we are straining to chew, in small bits alas, Oriental philosophies and religions, as well as the new industrial "mystique" in its two halves, locked in the death struggle of the day. Could we ever see meaningful, positive significance in Mohammed as the bringer of a message, i.e. of the oneness and majesty of God or the "inner-worldliness" of religion? Could we ever find a positive message for us Catholics in Luther, Calvin, Fox, Wesley, Kierkegaard, Barth and down to the bitter zeal of small sects with their effort to re-discover "pure" evangelism? Isn't it a puzzling fact that after Benedict, Bernard, Francis, Dominic and, belatedly, Ignatius Loyola—saints all of them and loyal and obedient—all "evangelism" of any significance and beyond the personal sphere has been out-

side the fold? Aren't these often narrow, bigoted, irritating, and more often, uncharitable scorners and spiteful seekers, meant to be something to us who are safe under the right shepherd?

India shows in her "hinduization" of sublime thought what happened to Brahmanism, Buddhism and even their reforms. In the hands of man "all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; and wears man's smudge and shares man's smell." I need not go into this: our harshest critics have found their classic in Dostoyevski's *Grand Inquisitor*. . . .

The Eastern Orthodox preservation of an attitude, long lost in the West, as well as the Protestant search for the essential hidden under the garment of tradition, should not be completely wasted on us. Our Catholicity may in God's plan need these forces for our own health and we may one day see that the Spirit "bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth," to use the King James version.

Balaam's ass and Cyrus of Persia were instruments of prophecy for the chosen people. Should we then say that neither the Eastern nor the dissident Western Christian has any task in the Kingdom of God for His chosen ones?

H. A. Reinhold
July 4, 1952

THE CRISIS of this age is one of freedom. How do many Catholics respond to this fact? They say error has no rights, but what does this mean? They say liberty is not license, but who believes that it is, outside of textbooks? And is not the distinction often used simply to mean that Protestants and Jews ought to let us have our own way in civil society? It is no wonder such slogans have largely lost whatever value they once had.

I know as well as the next man that there are real anti-Catholics around, many of them. Nothing Catholics could do would satisfy them, and no Catholic statements on freedom would influence them. But for every bigot in America there is at least one man of good will. We must think of that man. What is a Catholic to say to such a man when he quotes *Catholic Principles of Politics*, published in 1940 and written by two priests, John A. Ryan and Francis J. Boland, to the effect that if the United States ever becomes a Catholic State in which Protestants were numerically insignificant, their activities would be restricted and even their tax-exemption taken away? Does anyone seriously imagine that Protestants and Jews can find much comfort in the statement that such a mathematical contingency is highly unlikely, at least in the near future?

Certain things can and should be said to non-Catholic Americans on this score, of course. It is a fact that the American Bishops have taken notice of such wor-

ries. In 1948, speaking for all the Bishops, Archbishop McNicholas explicitly reaffirmed the fact that American Catholics accept and support the American Constitution, including the First Amendment. I take this as a binding moral commitment, and I am sure other American Catholics do too. It is also a fact that Catholic loyalty has been constant and unswerving since the foundation of this Republic, and this should count for a great deal. Then, too, I know that what Protestants call the classic Catholic thesis on Church and State is not nearly as simple as they think it is. . . . They fail to appreciate the extent to which the American experiment is unique and to understand that the traditional Catholic statements on democracy must be viewed in the historical context of European anti-clerical Jacobinism. But Protestants obviously need and would like to have more assurance and enlightenment on this score than they have yet received. Who will supply it if Catholics do not?

When the subject of democracy and freedom arises . . . it is good to be able to cite the work of men like Fathers John Courtney Murray and Gustave Weigel. Such discussions would be a great deal easier, though, if this list could be extended considerably. The plain fact is, I think, that Catholics are not thinking enough or saying enough about freedom in the light of the American experience, and we might as well face up to it.

James O'Gara
May 30, 1958

THE PLURALIST society in which we live is a dynamic, still evolving society. It can be fairly described as an experimental society. And in the course of the experiment we have learned that all "rights" are not to be fought for, that to speak only in terms of rights is, in fact, to be somehow inadequate to the complexities of the actual situations which arise. The attempt to invoke the law so that the personal behavior of all members of the community will conform to the moral standards of the majority, or of some minority with significant political power, is a hazardous undertaking. Of this the nation has had several salutary warnings. For example, the attempt, largely on the part of Protestant bodies, to enforce a particular code of ethical behavior in regard to alcoholic beverages brought on the ill-fated Prohibition with all its attendant evils. The Prohibition laws failed, quite obviously, because they did not actually reflect the values of the community to which they were intended to apply. And insofar as they failed to reflect the values of the community, these laws were necessarily unsuccessful.

While such considerations apply to all groups, Catholics should see that they have particular meaning for the Catholic Church in this country. Although it would be foolish to say that "Church-State" questions

are less complicated in the United States than elsewhere, it is true that they have developed here according to an historically unique and quite fortunate pattern. Constitutionally there is a clear distinction between the orders of competence of the Church and those of the State. This means that the State does not attempt to decide questions proper to the Church (what is sacrilegious, for instance), and the Church does not ask the State to enforce ethical codes which are not themselves supported by the society at large (can we use, for example, birth control legislation?).

It is evident that an element of self-limitation is here present. This element of self-limitation is highly desirable—it is, indeed, necessary for the ideal functioning of our society. Applied to any particular minority group, it means that that group would not attempt to impose upon the society by law every particular of its ethical code. Catholics, for instance, should not expect non-Catholics to accept restrictions on conduct which these non-Catholics regard as legitimate. In any case, it is practical wisdom for Catholics—or anyone else—not to attempt to have laws erected and directives established in accordance with their beliefs except where there is good reason to believe that there is, on the particular question, a consensus; only, that is, where the society can sustain such laws. Again, the example of Prohibition is pertinent.

The history of birth control legislation in the country is itself instructive. At one time the position now maintained almost alone by the Catholic Church—there are notable religious groups concurring in the Church's view—was widely held. In fact, in the only two states which place legal limitations on birth control measures, Massachusetts and Connecticut, the laws were devised and enacted largely by Protestants. But it is evident that beliefs, teachings, attitudes and opinions concerning such measures have changed greatly for many people during the last several decades. Where a consensus once existed, it no longer does. Or, more correctly, it has shifted ground. Other citizens cannot expect Catholics to change either their beliefs or their practices merely to conform to this newer consensus. But neither can Catholics expect to control the beliefs and practices of others concerning these measures.

Some have suggested that the acceptance of this position jeopardizes, or at least calls into question, the authority of the Church and the truth of its teaching. So far from this being the case, the reverse is more nearly true. For this position is based upon, and insists upon, the distinction between the authority proper to the Church and that proper to the State. It is where these are confused, where they are too forcibly yoked together, that the changing laws of society seem to endanger the unchanging doctrine of the Church.

James Finn
September 12, 1958

Catholics and Anti-Intellectualism

THERE HAVE been more grave reasons in recent years to fear that in our newspapers and our forums, not to say even on our campuses, we have frequently revealed a nervous spirit of impatient and sullen anti-intellectualism. Such a spirit is surely inconsistent with the enlightened insistence of our forefathers concerning what must be the attitudes and accomplishments of Catholics in the realm of intellectual life. . . .

It would be not only disastrous but also a bitter irony if any school of voluntarists, preoccupied exclusively with the virtues of the will (even sublime virtues so saving as obedience and so noble as loyalty) were to gain such ascendancy among the sons and daughters of the Church as to set at naught or almost annihilate the intellectual tradition in the household of the Faith. From the "*stat pro ratione voluntas*" of Luther and the *fides fiducialis* of Lutheranism, through the blind fatalism of Calvin and the perverse austerities of Jansenism, to the sentimentality and exaltation of instinct or feeling which, for all its superficial show of scholarship, characterized religious Modernism, the heresies which have divided the Christian flock in these last four centuries have been chiefly voluntarist and anti-intellectual. By the same token, the inspired witness of the Church—from the Counter-Reformation, the Council of Trent and the Ratio Studiorum, to the Council of the Vatican and the Syllabus against Modernism—has been a witness at once to the reality of Revelation and to the validity of Reason, to the essential part of rational elements even in the supernatural act of faith, and to the divine origin of the primacy and rights of the intellect in the natural order.

Since so many of the heresies which have wounded the Church and robbed her of so many of her children have been voluntarist heresies, anti-intellectual in their roots and pretensions, it would be pathetic indeed if anti-intellectualism now became a characteristic of those who have remained faithful to her obedience. What a tragic irony it would be, if, after centuries of battling for the natural law and the rights and function of reason, as well as for the primacy of the intellect over passion, emotion, instinct or even will, the Church should find herself represented in the world of the college, the press or the forum by persons contemptuous of that "wild, living intellect of man" of which Newman spoke and cynical about the slow, sometimes faltering, but patient, per-

severing processes by which intellectuals seek to wrest some measure of order from the chaos about us. . . .

✠ John J. Wright
December 16, 1955

OUR ENEMIES persist in saying that there is something intrinsic to Catholicism (dogmatism, book-burning, heresy-hunting are some of the terms they apply to it) which is hostile to scholarship. As Bernard Shaw put it, "A Catholic university is a contradiction in terms."

We know from the long history of the Church and from the presence in her now as ever of many distinguished scholars that this is certainly not true. And yet one can hardly suppose that any such opinion would have become so common if there were not a measure of truth to it, however distorted it may be. Scholars beget scholars. Everything depends ultimately on how material is presented to students. If it is presented as part of a well-rounded and fair-minded inquiry whose conclusions are open to modification or correction (except for those very few things in faith and morals which have passed the stage of inquiry and are now doctrinally defined), certain students will join the teacher in the labor of learning, which is scholarship.

If it is presented, as if to children, with the chilling finality of the closed mind, it will generate chiefly bigotry and, by natural reaction in the more perceptive students, skepticism. My own experience has been that in the humanities, at any rate, when they are not merely indifferent, Catholic educators are too often rhetoricians rather than inquirers, their principal concern being to prove that whatever is new in modern thought is either not true, not important, or not really new after all, having long since been anticipated by some Catholic thinkers. Frequently they are right, of course; but when the material cannot be treated in this fashion, they are not interested and they never therefore add to our knowledge or fire their students with a desire to do so.

Indifference, then, and what Father Weigel termed a defensive rather than a scholarly mentality seem the chief obstacles to American Catholic intellectual productivity. To find a cure, however, is not so easy as to describe the ailment. That our Catholic universities even now give a better education than many state and private schools, I would certainly not deny. But if

they are to become as intellectually active and stimulating as their better secular counterparts (that they are not so now is a matter of simple observation), a more critical spirit must be fostered among our teachers and our students and not confused with disaffection or disloyalty. College students may be at a difficult stage of life, but they are surely more like adults than like children and should be treated accordingly.

A university is not a seminary, any more than a good priest need be a learned man; but if a teacher or administrator has had only a seminary education himself, he may lose sight of this distinction and find it hard to sympathize with the inquiring, dialectical temper of the scholar. This, I think, has often been the case with us in the past and helps to explain the silence, if not even the acquiescence, of many of our university personnel when faced with the bad art, bad architecture, ill-conceived demonstrations of loyalty or opposition, embarrassing awards to inferior books and motion pictures, and similar manifestations of Catholic activity in America presented to us in the

admiring reports of a largely uncritical Catholic press. The obedience and docility that are properly expected in a seminary mean the death of scholarship when transplanted to a university. As yet our Catholic universities cannot be said to lead Catholic life in the United States, even in those very areas where educated opinion should carry the most weight.

Though I will not say the fault is wholly ours, as the secular mind has failings of its own, we have too long cut ourselves off from the great non-Catholic universities and from our colleagues therein, whose influence could be so invigorating and to whom we in turn should have something of value to contribute. Too often we have addressed only Catholic audiences or contributed only to Catholic journals. We are often so inbred that it is hard for us to see ourselves as others see us; and thus we are merely bewildered when they show hostility to us and cannot frame a reply to them in terms they will understand. . . .

Martin J. Svaglic
October 4, 1957

Race Riot in Cicero

by DANIEL M. CANTWELL

HAD HARVEY Clark and his family succeeded in moving into the Cicero, Illinois apartment he had rented in July, he would have been the first Negro resident of the town. By now the story of the riot and the violence in Cicero has gone round the world.

The damage to the building has been variously estimated from \$20,000 to \$50,000. The building stands uninhabitable. The Clarks are still without a place to live. The nineteen families who formerly lived in the building are gone. For them too the riot was a tragedy. They were willing to live in the same building with the Clarks. Organized violence decreed otherwise.

In retrospect there are mysteries about the incident. There was, for instance, the criminal negligence of the police. . . . Possibly, too, there was criminal conspiracy. . . . Finally there was the moral vacuum which became apparent in the days following the riot. The vacuum grew, I think, not merely because only a comparatively few religious leaders spoke up, but because when they spoke what they said was, for the most part, incomplete, cautious, negative. They said nothing about discrimination, nothing about the denial of brotherly love. On the part of Catholics in general there was none of the spirit of the policy laid down by Cardinal Stritch to govern the Catholic institutions of the diocese, a policy which allows no discrimination in the

life of the Church and which Catholics should feel it is their duty to carry over into civic and community life.

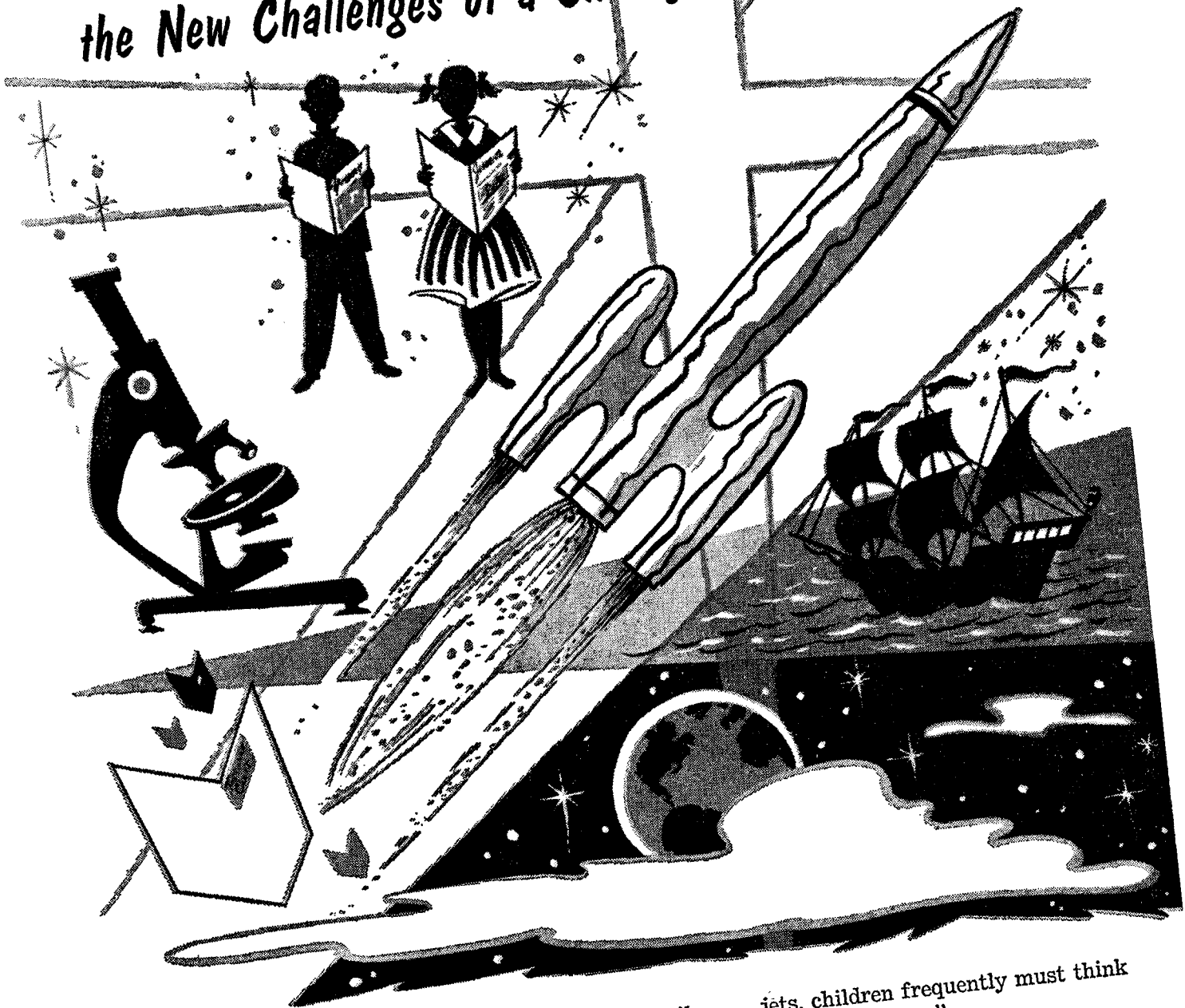
There were some exceptions. The clearest and most far-reaching moral pronouncement came from a group of laymen, residents of Cicero-Berwyn and the adjacent suburbs. . . . In an open letter they asked their neighbors whether people who love God could consistently go along with a social policy which condemned their fellow-men to indignities and injustices. The letter was picked up by the Catholic and secular press and was, I would judge, read by close to six million people.

"Attempts are made," they wrote, "to justify segregation by saying that it produces peace and harmony by keeping separate, people who would otherwise be in conflict. This ignores the fact that separation itself is a principal cause of conflict . . . since it fosters those traits in both the majority and minority groups that lead to conflict. . . ."

From close to the scene came some other moral protests. In at least one of the neighboring churches the priests spoke forthrightly on the riot. I know the same was done in at least three churches in Chicago. . . .

Cicero is by no means thoroughly bad. Indeed, what has gone wrong in Cicero is something good. The home-making human virtues of these people have been oversown by cockle, by national exclusiveness, by middle-class materialism, by the drying up of human

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compassion and sympathy for other families in need. They have acquired homes, but then made them the golden calf to be worshipped and possessed at all costs. They have arrived at middle-class suburban Utopia. The story of Dives repeats itself. The Scripture does not say that Dives was a very rich man. He was a man who had his spirit in his riches; he didn't like his spirit disturbed by anything as low-class as a beggar. He doesn't today like to be disturbed by anything as obviously "low-class" as brown skin. It runs down Utopia.

There are many signs that the Cicero incident has stirred an unprecedented revulsion against racial conflict and racial segregation. Individuals have acted. Groups are preparing to act. What must be developed now is a long-range educational effort. . . .

Cicero has given the final answer, I hope, to the contention that there is no use talking about the racial problem in church or school because we have no problem when there are no Negroes there. There were no Negroes in Cicero, either. There was hatred and pre-

judice which had never been challenged. By July, 1951 it was too late. . . .

It is not enough to decry events like the Cicero riot merely because the Communists use them as propaganda against us in Europe and Asia. The question is not what do the Communists think of Cicero, but what does Christ think about Cicero? Christ pictures the good neighbor as the man who bridged over in action the gap which separated Jews from Samaritans in His own day. The good neighbor took the man in trouble not to an inn for the Jews, but to his own inn. Then he footed the bill. He lost money; his good neighborliness cost him something. This good neighbor resisted the social pressure against fraternization, put himself to inconvenience, and paid a price financially.

Christ cited this as a case of love in action. There is no other proof of our Christianity comparable to it. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, that you have love one for another."

September 14, 1951

Mercy and Mr. Blanshard

ONLY a few weeks ago we read Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. Now when we come to write of mercy-killing the specter of that mass of misunderstanding rises up like some impassable wall. How to speak of moral principles to a mind like Blanshard's? How to break through the barrier separating the Catholic from the so-called modern mind? How to find words that will somehow be more than grist for the controversial mill; words that will convince rather than confuse, enlighten rather than enrage, mollify more than they madden? Blanshard is rude and unbelievably crude, but his is not a lonely voice crying out in the secularist wilderness. In his rejection of Christian tradition and reasoned morality, he speaks for millions. For Catholics to think otherwise would be a great illusion.

Paul Blanshard writes: "In meeting the challenge of euthanasia the Catholic hierarchy [typically Blanshard: it is never the Church or Christian teaching or the word of God but always the hierarchy] had an opportunity to accept a realistic advance in the practice of mercy. The priests could easily have emphasized the special reasons why the remedy could be applied to good Catholics who had received Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, and were therefore ready to die. Each hour of blinding agony is likely to take the victim farther away from that peace of mind

which is one of the primary aims of Catholic medicine in handling the dying."

When he reads something like that, the Catholic feels hopelessly cut off, out of communication, like a man speaking into a dead microphone. Making what is wrong right: for Catholics, just a matter of the priests saying so! And they can do that "easily!" Taking human life into one's own hands and preempting the rights of God: merely a medical "remedy." Sorrow for sin, reconciliation with God Himself, final purification on earth: all jumbled together into a facile and fashionable catchword, "peace of mind." The religion of Augustine and Aquinas innocently reduced to the level of a digest-magazine article.

A mind that has wandered that far from the Christian view of God and man and life itself cannot be reached by a few hundred words written for a magazine editorial. One would have to begin as a nun begins with a child: "Who made the world?," "Who is God?," "Why did God make you?" Then bit by bit through the drama of the Fall and the Incarnation; finally to the Christian Atonement and the divine mystery of suffering.

There may have been a time when one could have appealed to logic and reason and natural morality, but even that avenue has been cut off. The modern secularist mind doesn't *think* about morality; it *feels* its way, like a blind man groping in the dark.



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One could speak of the political dangers involved. One could quote statements like that of Mrs. Robertson Jones, executive vice president of the Euthanasia Society of America, Inc., to show how easily a euthanasia leader might be seduced by the genocidal ambition of a Hitler. Mrs. Jones: "Every law, however unjust, should be obeyed and enforced." (New York Times, January 3, 1950).

There are many things a man could say. But words have come to mean little in controversies of this kind. Words are the symbols for thought, and the proponents of euthanasia apparently do not consider them proper weapons. For them the elements of morality would better be symbolized by heart beats and the soft music of far-off strings. The Catholic in controversy with them—the Catholic armed with his logic, his syllogisms and the stern demands of reason—is left almost defenseless. There remain to him only prayer and penance, all the harsh weapons of the spirit which can call down the only true blessed mercy of God.

Editorial

January 13, 1950

Abbé Pierre and the Poor

by DOROTHY DAY

IT WAS CUSTOMARY in an earlier age for priests to wander around Europe, as St. Francis did, as St. Ignatius and his band of twelve priests and laymen did, but we don't hear much of such adventures these days. There is not only more organization in the Church, there is more discipline. But World War II brought about many changes in Europe, and one of those changes meant great freedom in the life of many of France's priests. . . .

Abbé Pierre was one of these priests who "was hunted like a bandit for two years" when he served as a *maqui*. He was two years a chaplain in the navy and he also served in Africa. He was ordained a Capuchin but left the order to work as a parish priest. Later he served in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, and it was thanks to his salary as a Deputy that he was able to start his first hospice, or rather very informally take in some of the needy men he encountered in the slums in Paris. . . .

"You can live alongside people whose lives are horrible and absolutely hellish and not have the faintest idea of this because they have the decency and self-respect not to go shouting the fact from the roof top or whining about it in the streets. They are ashamed and degraded," he says.

He goes on to tell of a young man of twenty-five who came to tell him that his wife has just been taken away to a mental hospital. In the three years of their married life, they had been forced to share one room with two other families. He had two babies and another one on the way. The young man sat and wept like a child.

Another time he saw an eighteen-year-old girl who had been fished out of the Seine. She had been living with eleven other people in a hole dug for a foundation of a house which had never been finished, and in the winter rains had become a mudhole.

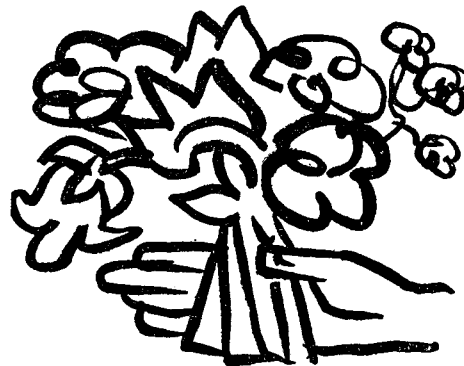
A priest in a neighboring parish called on him to come and try to help a family in his parish, living under a tarpaulin out in a field. They had been living there for eight months although the man was working. There simply was no housing for these poor workers. Two children had already died, and one little boy remained. Another child was on the way.

"It was then that I realized some terrible things," Abbé Pierre went on to say. "I realized that so long as people who were supposed to be apostles, as long as a priest like me was incapable of saying to that poor woman, 'Come on, get your things, pick up your child and come along with me and your husband and sleep in my room: I'll take your place in the tent and tomorrow we'll find some way of solving this,'—until then, well, fundamentally I was simply a humbug.

"In point of fact if I had talked to that poor woman, who had seen two of her children die, who was possibly expecting the one that was to be born to go the same way, and might even have been tempted to do away with it herself, if I had started talking to her about heaven and hell and the law of God, and told her that she had no right to do it, that it would be a crime—I was in the process of discovering that if I told her all that and then, having had my little say, left her in her tent in her field, to her misery and distress, whilst I, the priest, went back to my room, a poor room, no doubt, but even so a real room, where I could put an electric fire on when it turned cold, and could sleep peacefully in my bed, and be alone—if, after my little sermon, I failed to take her to some more cheerful place than her own, well, then, she was bound to think to herself, 'No doubt! It's all very fine what he says! Very true! But of course he is just a humbug like all the rest. . . .'"

It is well known, of course, what Abbé Pierre found to do. He had already gathered a crew of seventeen men. With his Deputy's salary and by their own work as ragpickers, these men somehow built shacks for one hundred and forty-one families. They put up tents; they bought land; they argued with the Minister of Reconstruction; they went out to the street at night and with a truck full of bread, wine, soup and blankets tried to serve the destitute. Every night until three

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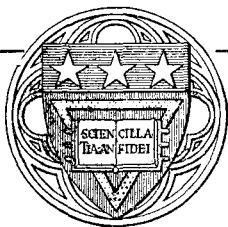
We could go on like this for pages—if space wasn't so short — just by looking up *Commonweal* reviews in old *Trumpets*. The current *Trumpet*, by the way, contains articles by F. J. Sheed and Philip Scharper. If you haven't seen it, write to us for a copy.

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o'clock in the morning, Abbé Pierre was out with his rag-picking friends, gathering up those who were sleeping in the doorways, lying like bundles of rags near warm ventilators. They found one old woman dying on the pavement after being evicted from her room for non-payment of rent. A child died of cold and exposure. Abbé Pierre requested the Minister of Reconstruction to come to the funeral, and he did.

Then came his now-famous radio appeal on behalf of the homeless of Paris. In the broadcast he announced that he had set up two emergency stations, and he begged his listeners to bring what they could spare of blankets, food, funds. At the doors of the relief centers which were set up were the simple words:

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And he begged his radio audience, "I beseech you, let us have enough love here and now to do this much! Let it be seen that so much suffering has at least given us back one wonderful thing: the soul of France!" And the people came with their gifts. . . .

December 28, 1956

Corruption in Political Life

by EDWARD S. SKILLIN

THE revelations of misconduct in office and tie-ups with crime that have regaled Americans in the past eight months have been abundant enough to raise doubts about the nation's political integrity. Is what we have recently confronted just the small portion of the iceberg which protrudes above the water? Or has the bulk of our notorious political misdeeds now come to light? Most commentators who tackle this subject, which is so painful except for those who seek to make political capital out of it, tend to agree with the Douglas Sub-Committee on Ethical Standards in Government that, generally speaking, our public servants are upright men.

Few will deny, however, that a prospect which includes city political heads beholden to notorious gangsters, Internal Revenue agents resigning under fire, lavish gratuities for lobbyists and five-percenters and the oversubsidizing of certain businesses and farm interests calls for remedial action. . . .

Back of all these institutional reasons for our political failings there is something that is even more fundamental. I refer to the dominant American philosophy of life. Success in the world is what matters—whether it be school and college sports, best sellers, hit parades,

Hooper ratings, brand names or a man's career. Success takes precedence above all else.

With dominant materialism as a background there is little wonder that no great outcry has confronted the efforts of lobbyists and politicians to get ahead. There have been sporadic scoldings from the pulpits of our various churches, but the public conscience has lain dormant. The extensive diversity of the nation's religious bodies—and the growth of religious indifferentism and the number of the churchless—has made it difficult for these moral forces to assert themselves effectively as mentors for political life.

Moreover the close cooperation between churches and political machines in certain large cities and states has deprived the voice of religion of much of its potentially salutary effects. For differences in religious beliefs do not necessarily mean that men of various faiths cannot unite to support integrity in office and a common political ideal.

November 2, 1951

The Crime of Pacifism

BY AN ODD sort of coincidence, stories about the jailing of former Air Force Major Claude Eatherly and the Catholic Worker's Dorothy Day recently appeared in the New York papers within the same ten-day period. In each case, the individual concerned had been in jail several times before; in each case problems of conscience were involved; in each case, the question at issue was moral responsibility, collective or individual, for U.S. thermonuclear policies.

The Eatherly story is, even if often reported, a tragic one. On the first United States atomic bomb mission, Major Eatherly flew the B-29 bomber that was sent over Japan in search of a target. Finding clear weather over Hiroshima, he then returned to guide in the plane that actually delivered the A-bomb. Since then, Mr. Eatherly has never been the same. Blaming himself for the atomic death of one hundred thousand Japanese, he has been in and out of jails and V.A. mental hospitals, and the newest charge against him, that of robbing a drive-in grocery, has been dismissed only on condition that he return to a V.A. hospital for further treatment. Mr. Eatherly, it seems clear, has taken on his own shoulders guilt a whole nation should find hard to bear.

In somewhat similar fashion Dorothy Day and a handful of others from the Catholic Worker are trying to bear on their shoulders what they see as a great weight of moral responsibility. During this year's nationwide air-raid drill they refused to take shelter, as they have done for several years, and again they were ar-

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rested and jailed. At this writing they are in prison waiting trial, and in some ways theirs seems a foolish gesture. What, people ask, do they hope to gain by such tactics? Even if they are pacifists, why protest an air-raid drill which might save some lives in a real thermonuclear war?

Such questions, it seems to us, miss the real point. The Catholic Worker group is protesting not so much the air-raid drill as the policy that lies behind it, and their point cannot be too lightly dismissed. We ourselves are not pacifists, as readers of the magazine know full well from our editorial comments week by week. But every Christian, no matter how vigorous his rejection of pacifism, must nevertheless concern himself with the question of legitimate means in warfare, and here it must be admitted that increasing national reliance on thermonuclear weapons makes at least this aspect of the Catholic Worker position more persuasive every year. One need not be a pacifist, certainly, to say that the United States is failing to maintain adequate military alternatives to thermonuclear war, or to say that in recent years responsible Christian voices have been strangely silent on this subject, at a time when protests about the direction of U.S. military policy would have been most useful.

Major Eatherly has found the load he carries too heavy to bear; one can only hope he will come to see that the rest of us must bear it with him, and that this awareness will somehow lighten his burden. Meantime, he deserves our prayers, and so too do Dorothy Day and the others from the Catholic Worker. If we do not share their every conviction, we recognize that they are bearing witness according to their own consciences, and we know how barren the world could be without voices like theirs. And if we reject their pacifism, we can only repeat here what we have said in other years: there is something seriously wrong when society fears questions from people like Dorothy Day so much that imprisonment is its only answer.

Editorial
May 1, 1959

Catholics and Social Justice

by JOHN C. CORT

BACK IN 1939 I was incarcerated in a Catholic TB sanatorium in the New York area. The cure of tuberculosis is a long-term business and in the course of the days and months one picks up a lot of miscellaneous information from patients and employees. One of the things I learned was that porters

and kitchen help in this hospital were getting \$35 a month, plus room and board and the risk of TB.

Down the road a bit there was another Catholic institution, an old people's home, operated by a different order of nuns, which was known by the Bowery types who worked there as "the Five and Ten." The name came from the fact that this institution paid its lay help \$5 and \$10 a month, plus room and board. You can see why they were Bowery types. No one else was willing to work there.

I also knew, in the thirties, a group of men, employees of a large Catholic university, who tried to organize a union and were quickly and vigorously suppressed by the religious college authorities. Since then I have heard of and witnessed similar abortive union efforts in Catholic social agencies, at Catholic colleges and institutions, on Catholic diocesan newspapers. The pattern was monotonously the same: workers wanting to join a union so that they could win better wages and working conditions, management dead-set against unionization and working energetically, and usually successfully, to defeat it. . . .

A few weeks ago I received a letter from a reader who told me the sad story of the efforts of a local of the Office Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, to secure a contract for the employees of two Catholic social agencies run by a diocese which has distinguished itself on the lecture platform as a friend of Catholic social theory.

The union won the support of a majority of the employees, but after nine months of negotiations it withdrew last December because of inability to gain any form of union security. During this period, according to my correspondent, the priest-director of the agencies handed out unilateral raises and fringe benefits, made a plea to the employees to the effect that a union was unnecessary and any problems could be worked out "within the family," and invited in a so-called labor-management expert to address the staff and tell them that a union was ineffective for this kind of group. These tactics, backed up by a firm stand at the bargaining table, were successful in driving the union away.

Successful? Success is a relative term. A lot depends on what you are trying to accomplish. If the objective is to run a Catholic institution or agency at the lowest possible cost, and with a minimum of interference from "outside parties," then it is a sure thing that these tactics were a success.

On the other hand, if the objective is to prove that the Church practices what she preaches, if the objective is to serve as a shining example to the world of what social justice really means, then it would seem to be quite obvious that these methods are a terrible and tragic failure.

April 12, 1957

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The Duty of Politics

by EUGENE J. McCARTHY

EVERY human society is political and every adult member of such a society must of necessity assume political obligations. A Christian must assume these obligations as a citizen, and more particularly as a Christian citizen. He must, as Pope Pius XII pointed out in his message correcting the misinterpretations of the directive "Return to the Spiritual," be actively present in political life—"wherever vital interests are at stake; where laws concerning the worship of God, marriage, the family, the schools, the social order, are being deliberated; wherever through education the spirit of a nation is being forged. . . ."

The calling of a Christian is not to judge the world, but rather to save it. In the conflict between good and evil, in which great advantage is given to evil by neglect, the Christian cannot be indifferent to so important an area of conflict as that of politics.

Not everyone has an obligation to run for public office, or even to become active in party organization. The measure of participation required of an individual depends on many conditions of personality and circumstances. There is no excuse, however, for complete neutralism and detachment. It is not even possible, under all circumstances, to justify the position of the "independent voter," or of the non-partisan citizen. These forms of political activity can be enjoyed only because others are engaged in party politics. . . .

In approaching politics, the Christian must be realistic—politics is a part of the real world. In politics the simple choice between black and white is seldom given. The ideal is seldom realized, and often cannot be advocated. For example, a Christian politician in a society in which many marriages are broken, may have to advocate and support divorce laws for the sake of public order. Trade, diplomatic relations and coop-

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eration with nations whose conduct he condemns may be made necessary by circumstances. . . . In making decisions of this kind, the Christian in politics, whether he is the official who makes the decision, or the citizen who supports the official and his decision, runs the risk of being called un-Christian or anti-Christian. This is a risk which he must be willing to take.

Despite these difficulties and complications it should nonetheless be possible to distinguish the Christian in politics. . . . He is not necessarily the one who is seen most often participating in public religious activities, or conferring with religious leaders. He is not necessarily the one who first and most vociferously proclaims that his position is the Christian one and who attempts to cover himself and his cause with whatever part of the divided garment that is within his reach. He is not necessarily the one who makes of every cause a "crusade" presenting himself as Carlyle described the crusader as "the minister of God's justice, doing God's judgment of the enemies of God." The Christian in politics should be judged by the standard of whether through his decisions and actions he has advanced the cause of justice, and helped, at least, to achieve the highest degree of perfection possible in the temporal order.

October 1, 1954

The Study of Christian Culture

by CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

OBVIOUSLY the academic study of Christian culture as an historical phenomenon is no substitute for religious education in the ordinary sense. What it might do, however, is help to remove the preliminary prejudice against the Christian view of things which plays so large a part in the secularization of culture. The fact is that the average educated person is not only ignorant of Christian theology; he is no less ignorant of Christian philosophy, Christian history and Christian literature, and, in short, of Christian culture in general. He is not ashamed of his ignorance, because Christianity has come to be one of the things that educated people simply don't talk about.

This, I think, is quite a recent prejudice which arose among the half-educated and gradually spread both upwards and downwards. It did not exist among civilized people in the 19th century, whatever their personal beliefs were. Men like Lord Melbourne and Macaulay could talk as intelligently about religious subjects as could Gladstone and Acton. It was only

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS, November 13
CHRISTMAS BOOKS, December 4

at the very end of the century that Christianity ceased to be intellectually respectable. . . .

Today there are signs of an improvement in this respect. Religion has come back into poetry and fiction, and there is once more a civilized interest in religious discussion. But this cannot go far unless religion is brought back into higher education, and this can only be achieved by giving the systematic study of Christian culture a recognized place in university studies.

A reform of this kind on the level of higher studies would inevitably penetrate the lower levels of secondary and primary teaching and by degrees affect the whole tone of public education. It is obviously difficult to improve the situation in the schools, if the teachers have no knowledge of Christian culture and if the standard set by the university is a secular one. However, it is for the universities and the other centers of higher education to take the first step; and if they did so, there is little doubt that they would find plenty of support elsewhere, and that their initiation of Christian culture study into the curriculum would be most fruitful in results.

January 25, 1957

AUTHORS—III

The Most Reverend Robert E. Lucey is the Archbishop of San Antonio.

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Edward S. Skillin is the editor of *The Commonweal*.

Eugene J. McCarthy is United States Senator from Minnesota.

Christopher Dawson is the first occupant of the Charles Chauncey Stillman Chair of Roman Catholic Theological Studies at Harvard.

IV—Religion and Esthetic Values

Literature and Morality

THE RELATION of morality to literature continues to be one of the cloudiest and most controversial concerns of the esthetic theorists, if not of the moralists. It is also, I should say, one of the most interesting and rewarding.

Unfortunately, as we encounter the moralistic judgment of literature today, it seems often to have been made with no awareness of the complexities involved, little appreciation of literature's function, scant knowledge of its techniques. Works of art are condemned, too often, on the basis of a scene, a character, a concept, a style, with no attempt made to see these as functioning parts of an esthetic whole. On the other hand, the absence of overtly "offensive" language, themes, etc., can equally often win approval for works embodying philosophies that are morally (if not sexually) questionable in any thoughtful Christian outlook.

What is perhaps most regrettable about this situation is that it cheapens both morality and literature. A morality of literature conceived of in such crude and narrow terms—standing or falling on slogans and details—seems either childish or hypocritical. Further, its application to literary values demeans them to the same degree.

A serious and knowledgeable analysis of a literary work in terms of moral value is much to be desired, and it is all that is necessary to dispel the notion that morality has no relevance to literature. It will also dispel the perhaps even worse notion that the Christian moralist is automatically the enemy of literature which is serious or difficult. Rather than enemies, of course,

morality and literature are inseparable allies.

Nevertheless, the moralist who turns to the judgment of literature must be as competent a student of art as he is of morality. He must be aware that he is dealing with a highly specialized, finely organized human discipline, one whose fundamental nature remains obdurately mysterious. As he makes his judgments, the moralist must be aware that he is doing so in the face of inevitably imperfect understanding, and on the basis of reasoning which must include a great many suppositions, contingencies and even doubts. Before such an array of limitations, it is the brave man who will pretend to have encompassed the problem in any simple formula. It is not the wisest man who will see his moral judgment of the literary work as more than what it is—a speculation on a difficult, shifting, mysterious interchange between artist, art work and reader. And it is not the most charitable or most prudent man who will hurl anathemas on the basis of so tentative a judgment.

Richard Horchler
February 27, 1959

IN OUR ATTEMPTS to cure ourselves of the disease of puritanism in matters of art, esthetic theory doubtless has a part to play. Some writings on the subject, those of Jacques Maritain especially, have already improved methods of presenting the arts in at least some Catholic schools and colleges. A Catholic body aware of its own traditions, however, should not require a new or revived science of esthetics to remind it that a seri-

ous view of art is an essential part of an integral Catholicism. One need only reflect on the role which the Teaching Church intends the liturgy to play in the formation of Catholics. The liturgy is, of course, much more than an art form, but all that it means as an expression of the heart of the Church it means through being an art-form and speaking the language of art. What it says cannot be said in any other way, and it is no accident that the Teaching Church has guarded the artistic integrity of the liturgy as carefully as its doctrinal content. Here form and content are separable only in idea, not in fact. A sensitivity to esthetic values—it may be, of course, on a wholly naïve and subconscious level—is, therefore, a necessity for a Catholic who wants to hear all that the Church has to say.

Nor can a Catholic body that aims at its own integrity be indifferent to the good estate of the secular arts. The primary purpose of these arts is not to teach morality or to "mirror essential being." Their primary purpose is to create forms which are artistically potent, forms which bring to the beholder the heightening of consciousness, the refinement and ordering of sensibility, which, in the natural order, art alone can bring. Like reason, artistic intuition is a specifically human thing. It is a force for human civilization perhaps no less powerful than reason. On that ground alone, it merits the respect of Catholics. . . .

Some direct their concern to the puritanism of many American Catholics towards secular art. Others have expressed concern at the passive resistance which the liturgi-

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cal movement meets in some American Catholic circles. Is it not possible that the indifference and the passive resistance are related? Perhaps both go back to our failure to incorporate, not only in theory but in practice, a serious view of art, secular as well as religious, such as the historian can easily show to be characteristic of vital Catholic bodies?

A puritanically moralistic view of art is not a serious view. It is, in fact, essentially frivolous; it blocks an important means of human cultivation and, in interfering with the integral development of the human person, actually endangers both morality and religion.

Charles Donahue

April 26, 1957

WE ARE SO accustomed to living in a world of man-made ugliness that it may never occur to us that ugliness of that sort means degradation, and degradation is a moral evil. It may never occur to us that the wanton creation of ugliness is a sin just as the wanton infliction of pain is a sin. . . .

Ugliness is evil; but the *portrayal* of ugliness need not be evil, for it may be beautiful, as when great artists paint the carnage of war or the horrors of our industrial cities. It is not the subject-matter that makes a book or a picture ugly or beautiful, evil or good, but the mode of its portrayal.

Thus there is not necessarily anything wrong in a "bedroom sequence" in a film: it depends on the sequence—and the bedroom. There is not necessarily anything wrong in portraying a bad priest, a murderer, a prostitute: it depends on the effect of the mode of portrayal. But it is just here that the confusion seems to arise. In how many ways can such an effect be bad? The normal answer, it seems, would be two, whereas it should be three. A film is held to be bad, if it (a) incites the beholder to sin—whether it does so deliberately or not; and (b) if it inculcates false doctrines, principles, standards of conduct, etc.

Now each of these points demands a little analysis before we go

any further. How does a film incite to evil? The usual answer, one imagines, would be that it does so either by immediately stimulating feelings which it would be sinful to indulge, or by portraying evil in such a way as to make the onlooker desire to follow similar courses himself. And the sort of examples which leap to the mind are, no doubt, the pornographic or sexy film in the one case and, in the other, the sort of film which glorifies brutality, gangsterism, sexual promiscuity, or crime.

But there is more to it than that. If an "edifying" film incites the beholder to resort to religion as to a narcotic, an escape from reality; that is incitement to evil. If it urges him to treat religion as a matter of emotional self-indulgence, that is incitement to evil. If it causes him to judge of human situations and problems not rationally but emotionally, sentimentally, that too is incitement to evil.

Where the inculcating of false doctrine is concerned there are similar conceptions. The "edifying" film can purvey falsehood just as much as the disedifying one. It is wrong to persuade people through the medium of film that murder or suicide is justified; but it is also wrong to persuade them that Christianity transformed into magic or superstition is a good thing; it is wrong to make them want to be honest because honesty is shown as being always the best policy, or to make them want to be saints because sanctity, as portrayed, is so glamorous. . . .

If the Church has been through its long history a civilizing influence in the world, it is because Christianity is concerned not with the soul merely but with the whole human personality. The ugliness which surrounds us is, in the last analysis, the effect of evil; and a not negligible part of the Church's work in the world consists in attempting to remedy that situation, and to sanctify material things.

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degradation of matter, to work for its rehabilitation, for the restoring of beauty and dignity to the natural world and to the world of man and the works of man alike. For the Assumption means the glorifying of purely human flesh and blood, and is therefore the symbol of the glorifying of matter as a whole; and if the Church calls our attention to it especially today, it is not merely in order that we may do homage to Our Lady for it but that we may set ourselves to the task of trying to give to the world we live in the qualities for which it stands.

Thus we return to the point from which we started. It is bad theology to regard aesthetic values as lying wholly outside the realm of morals; and when we fight for better standards in art and literature we are doing something which is not merely humanistically valuable, but which in the last resort is part of the total process of redeeming and renewing the world.

Gerald Vann
May 29, 1953

WE MUST remember that the value of a novel is determined by the writer's literary talent and that belief can never be a substitute for it. A successful religious novel depends on a very delicate balance between the man who believes and the man who writes. When the balance is achieved his talent will be enhanced; but it is only honest to admit that the contrary is true and that belief may well destroy talent. Maritain once remarked that "to have been written as it should have been written, the work of Proust would have needed the inner light of an Augustine." What we cannot say is that even if Proust had possessed the inner light of an Augustine, his book would have been written "as it should have been written." It seems to me to be doubtful whether it would have been written at all. Nor must we forget that some novelists have left the Church and written excellent books about their defection like Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*, while others have entered it and signaled their arrival by a disastrous book or have stopped writing altogether. . . .

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When a man appears before the world as a Christian writer, we are entitled to expect certain things of his work, certain qualities which are at once novel and artistic qualities. We expect religion to provide a background of order, enabling him to see good and evil in their true perspective. We expect it to act as a discipline, as a corrective to the vagaries of personal experience. We also expect charity, detachment and a balance in the portrayal of sin instead of what can only be called an incorrigibly romantic attitude towards it. It should not be a mere excuse for self-indulgence and for the release of the most destructive passions known to erring human nature nor should it degenerate into a mere religious aestheticism. For the rest, contemporary novelists who are also Christians are unquestionably more successful when they write in a lighter vein. They have given us some highly amusing 'scenes from clerical life' like Mr. Powers' *Prince of Darkness*; they have given us Mr. Greene's 'entertainments' and Mr. Waugh's earlier novels. When the writers grow serious they come to grief. *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Heart of the Matter* seem to me to be their authors' least happy productions.

Martin Turnell
October 26, 1951

**The Literature
of Despair**

IT WOULD be hard to find a major author of our century unaffected by despair. A whole school of poets and dramatists denounces an uncontrollable absurdity. But it is perhaps the much more vocal school of novelists that performs most heroically in the arena of despair. One thinks of such continental writers as Kafka, Gide, Mann, Moravia, St. Exupéry, Roger Martin du Gard, Malraux, Koestler, Camus and even Françoise Sagan. One thinks, too, of such English-language writers as Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Hemingway, Orwell, Faulkner, and Huxley.

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At this point there may be a temptation to associate despair with atheism. It is when we discover that despair is plumbed more deeply and examined more closely by the Catholic writer that we suspect atheism is accidental to the subject. Graham Greene, with his lost childhoods and struggles for salvation, comes to mind immediately. "Man's condition," wrote Bernanos, "is such that neither around him nor within him can he perceive anything except in the form of agony." Julian Green, expressing his view of life, said: "Living in this world is a bad business. The Bible is one long lament for the sadness of the world and St. Teresa did not scruple to say that life is only a bad farce." Mauriac, with his Pascalian vision, believes in "the bestial end of civilization." Add to these the no less apocalyptic figures of Claudel, Chesterton, Bloy and Sigrid Undset and we find a formidable expression of despair within the framework of the Catholic faith itself. . . .

The literature of despair embodies one of the most searching self-examinations man has ever attempted. And its immediate significance, as it appears from this brief analysis, is this: we are responsible for the salvation of the world no less than of ourselves. We have a debt towards life. That is to say, we must commit ourselves to the establishment of a human world order by identifying ourselves personally with the misery and suffering of mankind and in this manner establish meaning and identity in our own lives. Human dignity must be safeguarded—at the price of great suffering. From a multiplicity of approaches, and with varying degrees of insight, the authors of our century have propounded that thesis. There is, in addition to those already examined, Joyce setting himself "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." There is Antoine de St. Exupéry asking the question that plagued Job centuries ago: "What is it that corrupts the noble clay of which man is made?" There is the struggle of a Vercors against the "awareness we have of ourselves as a race constitutively exiled from the cosmos,

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plunged in ignorance and solitude and condemned to die." There is the tortured drama of a D. H. Lawrence, a Gide or even a Sagan. And the extraordinary testimony, charged and vibrant and defiant, of a Simone Weil teaching the disturbing truth that the unbelief of atheists is closer to love of God than the easy faith of those who never really experience Him, accepting the void of this life and proclaiming the Absurd as a religious category through which we attain to a goodness not of this world.

*Bernard G. Murchland
February 21, 1958*

Beliefs and Poetry of T. S. Eliot

SOME American Catholics have uncritically accepted T. S. Eliot as an ally and have exploited the poetry almost as if it were a tract. The poetry is there and has its own marvelous validity, and the beliefs which have entered into its texture are of supreme relevance both for Eliot as an individual and for an understanding of the verse. If we continue to treat it as an orthodox restatement of Catholic doctrine we shall, on the one hand, alienate democratic social philosophers from the serious examination of the larger claims of Catholicism. And if Catholic critics persist in subjugating literary criticism to non-literary ends they will earn the contempt of their more conscientious colleagues.

In America there seems to be a special temptation to require of poets more than they can give. It was Emerson more than anyone else who achieved the transfer of the hieratic from religion to letters, from the altar to the lyceum. That is perhaps why so many in our country, recognizing in *The Waste Land* the evocation of their own disillusionment, came to look upon Eliot as a false seer when he did not escort them to some sub-lunary utopia.

If we do remain content with what Eliot has given us, the reward will be great indeed. He, to-

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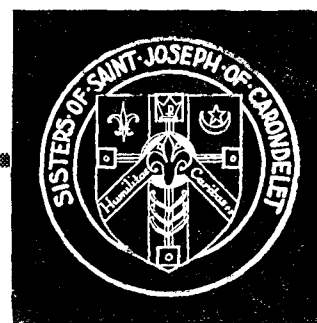
gether with Yeats, redeemed English poetry in the first half of the twentieth century. But the achievement of Yeats, splendid though it has been was a personal and private achievement. If Eliot's style is inimitable, it is also viable; that is to say, it is the medium through which other poets renew themselves. When Auden ran to his Oxford tutor to announce that Eliot was henceforth to be his model in verse composition, he attested to the advent of a new dispensation. Our poetry no longer dwells in hypnotic dalliance on Calypso's isle.

John W. Simons
February 27, 1953

Mauriac and Gide: Great Adversaries

FRANCOIS MAURIAC was horrified when the Nobel Prize was awarded to André Gide. It was, he thought, a sinister portent that the stricken Europe of today should single out for honor the great immoralist, the experimental anti-Christ. His horror, one imagines, must now be tinged with confusion. The fact that it has been possible to award this prize both to Gide and to Mauriac provokes the mind to grapple with the ambiguities, perhaps the contradictions, that are present in our idea of literature. . . .

Literature is surely neither an abstract and self-sufficient pattern, as the Parnassians asserted, nor yet just another form of propaganda in favor of the good, or the bad, life. It is the most human, the least pure of the arts, the one that tells us most about ourselves. It is—to use a word that has lately been much misused—our self-criticism, a subtle and continuing process. I say continuing, but of course we have no certainty that it will continue: we have seen of late that in certain conditions literature can become a system of political flattery and fictionalized slogans, and that the word self-criticism, in the same climate, turns into a technical term, meaning forced confession of crude and improbable crimes.



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These practices of total politics must lead not merely to a blunting of human conscience, but probably to an actual dulling of consciousness itself; in short, a regression to a lower human type. It has been, on the other hand—and it still is—the glory of our bourgeois culture that it has eventually honored those who have not flattered it. Those who do flatter it are of course more numerous and better paid but that is not very important; what is important is that the process of self-criticism, the painful movement towards a finer consciousness, still continues.

In that process these two writers, Gide and Mauriac, with their exceptional lucidity and sensibility, have played a great part. Different though their views of the universe are, they have both tried to tell the truth—not such a simple matter as is generally believed—and to provide increasingly delicate and sensitive instruments for recording and expressing it. This is the great common element in their so diverse achievement, and it is this above all that justifies the conferring of the same honor on the two spiritual adversaries.

Donat O'Donnell
May 15, 1953

Prose and Poetry of Samuel Beckett

THE FIRST thing to be said about Samuel Beckett—and I suspect it will be the last—is that he is essentially a poet. . . . Beckett's prose comes from the same imaginative fount that his early poems do; the later prose is far better than the poems, but it is prose written as poems are written, conveying emotion directly to the reader. His stories and his play have the structure of poems rather than strictly narrative and dramatic forms. That is one reason out of many why audiences were first disquieted then moved by *Waiting for Godot*: they came to see a play; what they learned was something that did not imitate poetry as they

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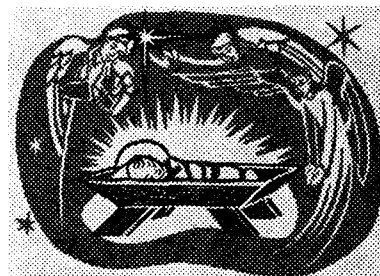
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knew it, but was the economical, sometimes ambiguous language of poetic imagination.

The second thing to be said is that Beckett is a comic writer of the first order, one who has an intense poetic understanding and revelation of human destiny. At the highest moments of Beckett's farcical situations, he is most serious, most revealing and in a certain sense (of which there is more to say) *religious* in his view of the human comedy. In his writings, the emotions caused by terror, pity, despair, the death-wish, and love are purged by laughter. Beckett achieves a nearly classical distinction, ancient enough, but he has renewed it in twentieth century terms, of what comedy should be; his heroes are mock-tragic heroes, "Dying Gladiators," yet never attaining respect among living creatures around them, or a desired funereal dignity. They are never completely damned or blessed. They inhabit purgatory. . . .

No paraphrases of Beckett's writings can hope to equal the actual performance of what he says. The best one can do is realize that his prose, like poetry, has its own shades of meaning and association. Today, and at a moment when most writers have become willing to conform to whatever demands society makes upon them, Beckett stands almost alone.

Horace Gregory
October 26, 1956

Mauriac On His Novels

THE book which I am forever rewriting, that wave, which is always the same one as it rises endlessly out of my inner ocean, inevitably strikes and breaks against the self-same reef: love, the cult of childhood and adolescence, attachment to an object which eludes all grasp. The hero of *Le Noeud de Vipères*, speaking of his daughter, Marie, and his nephew, Luc, speaks for me in interpreting this profound feeling. And the "monsters" I am accused of creating ap-

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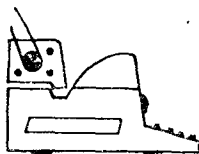
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pear monstrous only in so far as they are judged side by side with the child within them who does not want to die, whose face is still shining with what Claudel has called "the everlasting infancy of God."

But the attraction of the fleeting, of what "no man shall see twice," is not solely the mark of childhood. "The Desert of Love" might well serve as the title for my entire work. All of it illustrates what philosophers today call the "problem of the other one," the passionate desire to possess the other one, not as a passive object and as someone "I look at," but as subject, as an inaccessible being "who looks at me." To possess the body of another is to embrace a corpse. . .

What is disquieting in the present concern with techniques of so many new French writers is not that they are eager to know what there is in Joyce, Dos Passos or Faulkner that is valid and assimilable for them, but that they mistakenly believe in the existence of any rules having universal value. This betrays a failure to understand the fundamental law that a true novelist must first of all invent his own rules, rules which are valid for him alone and for the universe which it is in him to create.

François Mauriac
May 15, 1953

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Bernanos and The Modern Threat

IN HIS FAVORITE characters, Bernanos saw not only the heroes of spiritual conflicts, but exceptional men in general who, although clumsy and inexperienced, have a deep understanding of the world and its ways. This penetrating mind, however, they do not turn to personal profit; their presence in the world is a constant reminder that despite the crushing weight of modern existence, the right of inner life must be, and can be, preserved. With no trace of smugness, but with a superiority illumined by faith, the curé of Ambricourt and Chantel de Clergerie revolutionize the existence of the

people with whom they come into contact, tread across their path with the lightness of angels, but leave behind transformed human beings.

Genuine inner life, earnestly engaged in the spiritual battle whose manifestations he saw everywhere, was for Bernanos the condition of man's survival as the noblest creature of God. "The saints," he said in his *Letter to the Europeans*, "are fellows who . . . would let themselves be made into mincemeat before giving Caesar anything more than his due." The Caesars, at the time he wrote this, were the mad dictators, Communist and Fascist. But he equally feared the other danger to inner life, the world turned into the Technicians' Paradise. "The only sort of inner life that they would allow," he said, "would be a modest form of introspection, directed by the doctor, and tending to produce an optimistic frame of mind." Against the double threat of totalitarian mentality, he saw only one defense line, the last but most formidable one: the mind of free men. The whole earth is, after all, like the village of Ambricourt: to set it straight, "heroes are needed whom the world cannot assimilate; for it is better for the world to risk its soul than deny it."

Thomas Molnar
December 7, 1956

The Talent of J. D. Salinger

SALINGER, though he served an apprenticeship in the *Saturday Evening Post* and writes for the *New Yorker*, is an artist and art is not for diagnosis—not until we are through with it as art. Once we have made it a source of data, we cannot treat it as a source of wisdom. Second, Salinger does *not* write about the Lonely Crowd, the man made in the image of B.B.D. and O., the Great American Oral Type, the consumer of love and rauwolfia. He writes about saints, pilgrims, and artists. . . .

Salinger's kind of mystic is a spiritual perfectionist, and the mem-



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Yet Salinger remains one of the most powerful talents now practicing the short story. For the many who are involved in an effort like his, his struggles are more meaningful than other men's successes.

Donald Barr
October 25, 1957

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